CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

The Beaver

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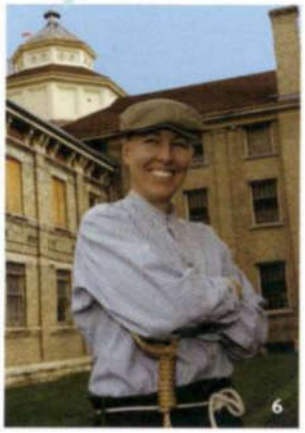

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The Beaver
CANADA'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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The Beaver *Canada's History Magazine*
(issn 0005-7517) is published bimonthly
by Canada's National History Society
at 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg,
Manitoba R3B 0T6 Canada.
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TheBeaver.ca

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Annual Subscription (6 issues):
Canada, $29.95 (includes GST).
Residents of Manitoba, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia add $1.96 on a one-year subscription.
Please add $8 a year for U.S. orders and $15 a year for foreign orders.
Single copy price: $5.95.
Subscribe by phone, fax, mail, e-mail, or through our website: TheBeaver.ca

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GST Registration Number: 13868 1408 RT

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Canadian Postmaster:
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
The Beaver Magazine,
478–167 Lombard Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0T6,
email:thebeaver@historysociety.ca

U.S. Postmaster:
Send address changes to
The Beaver Magazine,
c/o UPS Supply Chain Solutions, Box 369,
Pembina, North Dakota 58271

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40063001
Registration No. 09708.

Postage paid in Winnipeg.

ccab.

Issued March 2005

Printed in Canada on recycled paper

Canada

We acknowledge the financial support of the **Government of Canada** through the *Publications Assistance Program* and the *Canada Magazine Fund* toward our mailing and editorial costs.

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A radical, rational rethinking

Thank you for publishing the fine article by Douglas Hunter on the so-called "Champlain Astrolabe" [December 2004/January 2005]. It is about time that this subject underwent a thorough reexamination. I am sure the author will receive some hostile criticism for daring to tackle this holy icon of Canadian history. In 1976, I gave a conference paper at York University on Champlain's observations of latitude and longitude in which I stated, almost as an aside, that his readings of latitude were better than the capabilities of the Cobden astrolabe. The reaction to this opinion, by some in the audience, was to me totally unexpected. I was accused, among other things, of being "unpatriotic" and of "trying to tear down cherished aspects of Canadian history." All I could say at the time, and I still feel this way, is that if someone expert at using an astrolabe can show me that he/she can make solar readings with the Cobden instrument to an accuracy of a quarter of a degree (15 minutes) as Champlain did, I will change my mind. This would be quite a challenge. Try splitting the space of one millimeter (one degree on the Cobden instrument) into four equal pieces. With a brass replica of the Cobden instrument, made by International Museum Replicas, Boston, I have taken both vertical and horizontal angles of fixed objects and checked my readings with a theodolite. I did not take solar observations, which are much more difficult to do. My results were disappointing but not unexpected. I was unable to achieve any accuracy with that astrolabe better than one degree.

Hunter has worked out the portage route through the Muskrat Lakes chain much better than the standard map by Mr. J. L. Morris printed in the Champlain Society edition of Champlain's Works (1925). I also like his reasoning that the astrolabe could have been lost by one of the Jesuits. Some of them carried instruments to make the observations, that were used in the maps of Sanson (1650 and 1656), the one attributed to Bressani (1657), and one published by Du Creux (1660). In fact, Father Bressani, who was trained in astronomy and mathematics, was sent to Canada in 1642 not only as a missionary but also to make accurate observations of latitude and eclipses to determine longitude. In 1649, Bressani was ambushed by the Iroquois somewhere along the Ottawa River, lost his baggage, and had to return to Quebec badly wounded. I support Hunter's point that some Jesuits were carrying instruments that they were trained to use and some lost their baggage along the route. I echo Hunter's opinion that it is impossible to prove who lost the Cobden instrument without new evidence.

CONRAD E. HEIDENREICH
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, GEOGRAPHY, YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

Words from Weena II

Imagine my surprise when, late last November, I began receiving phone calls and emails from friends and acquaintances, all reporting enthusiastically on "my" article in the *Beaver* ["Weena: Thomas McIlwraith among the Bella Coola," December 2004/January 2005]. Some knew about my father, Thomas McIlwraith the anthropologist; others knew that the Toyota in Mississauga with WEENA on the license plate is mine. The names in the article resonated, and I proudly (and uniquely) carry both of them. Paula Wild has written a really fine, readable, and informative article, and Harlan Smith's photographs are stunning. The McIlwraith family is pleased that the *Beaver* has broadened Canadians' awareness of this chapter in Canada's history and our father's place in it.

I would like to add to this story. In October 1991 the Pootlass-Brown Memorial Potlatch took place in Bella Coola, an occasion in which the Nuxalk people honoured my father's memory and his work among them nearly seventy years earlier. In reference to McIlwraith's 1948 monograph, *The Bella Coola Indians*, band elder Lawrence Pootlass spoke of how "these books are worth more than gold to us," for they gave the Nuxalk direct access to their culture – a culture that scholars at the Victoria Museum in the 1920s had concluded was dying. But it did not die. The salvaged ethnography of a decaying past had been transformed by band members into cultural inspiration that was nourishment for today's rebounding

***The Beaver* welcomes readers' comments.** E-mail us at <editors@historysociety.ca> or write to *The Beaver*, 478–167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0T6 Canada. Please include your address and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

and vibrant Nuxalk community. A dozen members of the McIlwraith family attended that potlatch, guests of the community, and in a naming ceremony filled with dances, masks, and songs that I had until then only read about in my father's work, the Nation bestowed on me the name "Weena" – the name that had originally been given to my father in 1922 and which had lain dormant since his death in 1964. My son, yet another Thomas, marks the Pootlass-Brown Memorial Potlatch as a turning point in his career. He too is an anthropologist, and his ethnographic study among the Tahltan community of Iskut, British Columbia, is now taking its place in Canada's First Nations literature.

Quite possibly none of this recent history would have occurred without the perceptive mediation of Dr. John Barker of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Barker has written about my father's experiences in Bella Coola in a series of academic articles dating from the late 1980s. Together with the late Professor Douglas Cole, a historian at Simon Fraser University, they have brought the story of the Nuxalk revitalization forward from the mid-twentieth century. Readers should be aware of two recent significant publications. One is Barker's 1992 "Introduction" to the reissuing of my father's 1948 text (University of Toronto Press). The other is *At Home with the Bella Coola Indians* by Barker and Cole (University of British Columbia Press 2003), a volume of my father's public and private correspondence from his months in Bella Coola in the 1920s.

WEENA (THOMAS F. MCILWRAITH)

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

Eyewitness

I was interested in the article about the origins of northern humour on page 21 of your October/November 2004 issue, especially the paragraph about the wolf attacking the section man. I was the front-end trainman of the train involved.

Being on the engine when the engineer applied the brakes, I asked why he was stopping, and he said, "There's a section man fighting with a wolf." So he backed up to the spot. I hit the wolf on the head with pick, and fireman J. Green hit it with the shaker bar. This finished the wolf.

My understanding of the episode was that Mike Dusiak was patrolling on his velocipede when he took it off the rails to let our train go by. While waiting on the right of way between track and bush, the emaciated wolf jumped him. Mike had lost his hatchet and had only a dead branch in his hand to fend off the wolf. When we came upon them, both were winded.

We put the wolf on the cowcatcher and took it to Chapleau about twelve miles away, where we notified V. Crichton of the Lands and Forests Department, who immediately walked to Poulin to verify the story by observing the foot and animal tracks before it snowed again. He wrote an account of it in the *Journal of Mammalogy* [Vol 28, No 3. August 1947]. It can be found in the library of the National Archives in Ottawa.

JOHN WAY-WHITE

CHAPLEAU, ONTARIO

Evidence evolution

Michael Riordon's article "Evidence and Oral History" [December 2004/January 2005] was interesting, but his conclusion is unremarkable given general trends in the law of evidence.

First, courts are expanding the things they are willing to accept as evidence. One example is hearsay evidence ("I heard someone else say this, so it must be true"). At one time, hearsay evidence was virtually never accepted, but now it is accepted more frequently.

Second, courts are increasingly skeptical about the weight they will give to evidence. For instance, eyewitness testimony ("I saw this, so it must be true") was once the gold standard. Now, due to recognition of faulty observational skills and recall, the credibility of this type of evidence has lessened.

It seems to me that the treatment of oral histories by courts and governments is no different from these general trends: oral history is being increasingly accepted as evidence, but some doubts as to its credibility remain. The real question is: Why should it be treated differently?

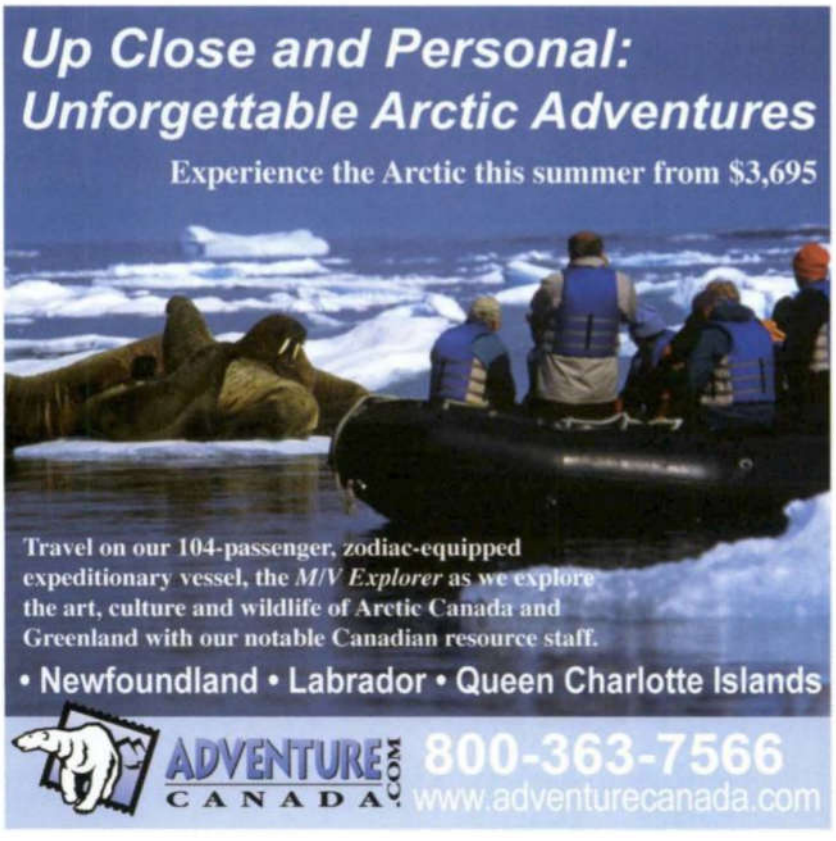
SHERIE VERHULST, LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Erratum

In the December 2004/January 2005 issue, the photo credits on the article "Rag-&-Bone Men," by Benita Baker, were transposed. The photo on p. 24 is from the Ottawa Jewish Archives; the photo on p. 25 is from the City of Toronto Archives.

More Letters The *Beaver* website offers a new section for letters to the editor. To see letters that may only be available online, go to <www.thebeaver.ca>, and click on "Extra! Extra!" to get to the "Letterbox" section.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Currents

HERITAGE

Digging the Doukhobors

In 1899, about 200 Doukhobors, part of a larger contingent of 7,500 Doukhobors escaping religious and political persecution in Russia, arrived in the area around present-day Blaine Lake, eighty kilometres north of Saskatoon. Cozy bungalows did not await them. For shelter from the brutal prairie winter and the often-brutal summer, and with building materials few, they had a single option – caves. They carved holes into the north side of the North Saskatchewan River and made mud-and-wattle dwellings. The back wall was the river embankment, the roof was sod, and the floor prairie clay. And there they lived for four years, while they built log houses half a kilometre away in what became the short-lived village of Ospennia. (By 1913 most of the residents had moved elsewhere.) As houses of such a temporary nature are wont to do, however, the abandoned cave dwellings essentially disappeared. Except one. Blaine Lake farmer Brenda Cheveldayoff's great-grandfather's cave home, though its walls tilted and grayed, had remained largely preserved over the years by interested family members. Today it holds the distinction of being the only existing structure of its kind in Saskatchewan, and has, in the last two years, attracted both archaeologists to scour the site and tourists to view an exceptional piece of the past. Scheduled for provincial historic designation this year, the structure is undergoing restoration as a permanent site. It's on private property – the Cheveldayoff farm – but Brenda is so pleased to be helping revitalize interest in Doukhobor history, she doesn't mind the traffic.

RESTORATION

Hix fix stix pix

Once upon a time, long, long ago, before Hollywood became the centre of the film universe, there lived in the land of Canada, in a town called Port Arthur, a plucky Brit named Dorothea Mitchell. No stranger to hard work (later service in the lumber trade earned her the moniker Lady Lumberjack), Dorothea in the winter of 1929 organized an amateur cinema society in the transportation hub now known as Thunder Bay, Ontario. The aim was not to watch films and critique them over lattés, as people might do today. The aim was to make films – feature-length films, no less. And they did, complete with angles, cutaway, dolly shots, and the whole panoply of cinematic techniques. Between 1929 and 1931, the Port Arthur Amateur Cinema Society made two feature-length, silent, black-and-white films and nearly completed a third before talking pictures and the Great Depression brought down the final curtain. The first film, *A Race for Ties*, about an unscrupulous lumber baron's efforts to steal a contract for railway ties, starring the local baker, truck driver, and other townsfolk, is considered the first amateur feature-length film in Canadian history. On the strength of it, Mitchell, as writer, actor, director, editor, and wardrobe mistress, is considered one of the first independent women feature filmmakers in Canada. *Ties* and the second film *Sleep Inn Beauty*, a comedy about a rigged beauty contest, were collecting dust at the National Archives, which had received them years ago from the Canadian Film Institute where Dorothea had had the foresight to deposit them. The third, however, The *Fatal Flower*, had been forgotten until Thunder Bay filmmaker Kelly Saxberg stumbled across it looking for archival footage of Northern Ontario. A murder mystery, it was forty-five minutes of film, unedited, but usable, though there was no surviving shooting script or dialogue cards. Nevertheless, Saxberg and her husband, Lakehead University history professor Ron Harpelle, together with other Thunder Bay film buffs, restored the film, edited it into a coherent narrative, created new dialogue for the dialogue cards, and wrote a score reflecting the music of the era. Debuted last fall as the first silent film created in Canada in seventy-five years, *The Fatal Flower*, along with *A Race for Ties* and *Sleep Inn Beauty* is now available on DVD at <www.ladylumberjack.ca>.

PHOTOS COURTESY RON HARPELLE

Dorothea Mitchell

Though Dorothea's career as an *auteur* was brief, her life was long. Homesteader, sawmill owner, realtor, wartime civil servant, writer, and author of *Lady Lumberjack*, her autobiography, she died in 1976 at age ninety-nine. Yet her work lives again, thanks to the magic of film.

LIVING HISTORY

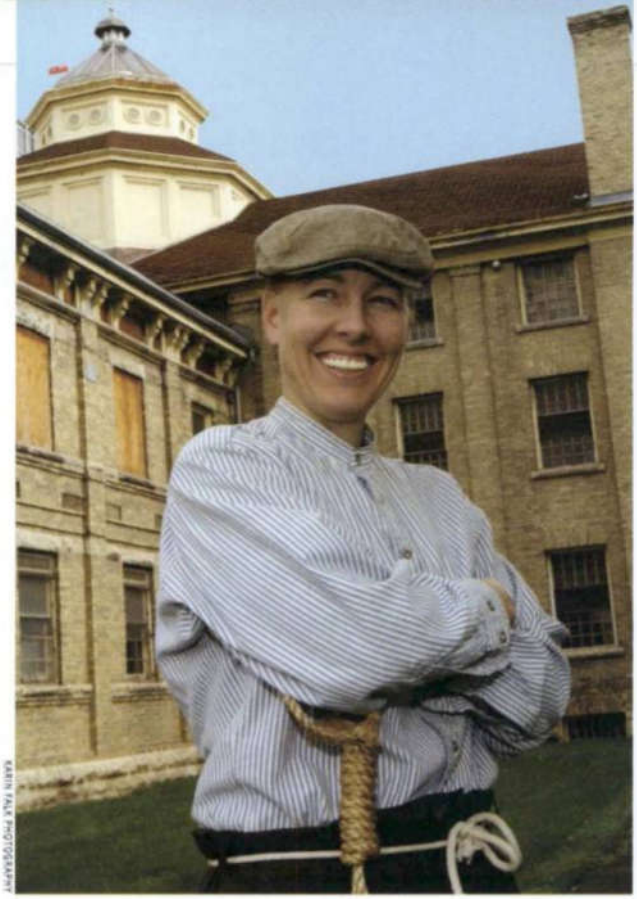
Tour guide

Dressed as a jail warden and carrying a noose, Kristen Verin-Treusch recounts tales of murder, execution, ghosts, and monsters to spellbound tourists. Her business is Muddy Water Tours, a historical walking tour company she started in Winnipeg in 2002 after an inspirational trip to Scotland. "I was so fascinated by the way history was presented in Europe, and I wondered whether Canadian – and specifically Winnipeg – history could be marketed in such a way."

As a graduate student at the University of Winnipeg, Verin-Treusch studied the city's history, and her research would become the basis for her summer tours. "There are so many unusual and interesting characters in Winnipeg's past," says Verin-Treusch. "Our first mayor, Francis Cornish, as a magistrate sentenced himself, then appealed the sentence, subsequently denied his own appeal, and when forced to pay the court a five-dollar fine, did so by placing the money from one hand into the other."

In her first year of operation, Verin-Treusch offered two tours: The Boom and Bust of Winnipeg, which tells of the rise and fall of the "Chicago of the North," and Murder, Mystery and Mayhem, which haunts its participants with the spooky side of the city's past. The tours were so successful (more than 700 people attended) that Verin-Treusch has since added two more excursions: Pestilence, Shamans and Doctors as well as a tour of the infamous Brookside Cemetery, where the famed Sergeant Tommy Prince, Captain Frederick Stevenson, and "Bloody" Jack Krafchenko – a bank robber who stole from institutions across Canada, the United States, and Europe – are buried. This year, she hopes to add a new tour or two to her repertoire.

Verin-Treusch believes local history is valuable, that the characters, architecture, and locations serve as markers of how civilization evolves. "Learning about our history reveals where we are today, why things are the way they are." By creating these tours, Verin-Treusch attempts to bring an awareness of this to a popular audience in a way that proves Winnipeg history, as she says, need not be "as dry as the prairies."



KARIN FALK PHOTOGRAPHY

Kristen Verin-Treusch takes tourists around Winnipeg's nineteenth-century Vaughan Street Jail, which housed criminals from Manitoba, Northwest Territories, and Ontario. Verin-Treusch is working to reopen the building, currently closed to the public, as a heritage venue.

ARTIFACT

Mourning miniature

"It was with great sorrow and grief that I learned from Mrs. Macaulay the melancholy death of your darling son, my little namesake. The call was sudden and unexpected, therefore the more lovingly felt. The shock to you when first acquainted with the mournful event must have been dreadful. … What a blow to a fond mother. … One only hope and trust is that your little innocent was called out of this world before he became sensible of its vices, and that his soul is enjoying the society of the blessed above."

(John McGill, York, to George Crookshank, c/o David R. Lambert, New York, 24 March 1824.)

This miniature portrait of John McGill Crookshank (July 12, 1823–March 3, 1824) marks the life – and death – of a beloved child. The infant, just shy of eight months old, was the first child of York's Honourable George Crookshank – United Empire Loyalist, prosperous merchant, and member of Upper Canada's Legislative Council – and his American wife Sarah Susannah Lambert, daughter of a wealthy New England businessman.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM/GIFT OF MRS. STEPHEN A. HOWARD

John McGill Crookshank, by Anyhony or Nina Meucci

Last of the big-time pourers?

Order a rye and Coke at Joe English's bar in Whitehorse and two things become clear. Joe pours the demon drinks your mother warned you about. And those nursing cocktails at the bar like it that way.

"We have good drinks, free-pour drinks. Anybody who wants a drink with something in it, they come here," brags sixty-seven-year-old Joe, cocking his head to the right to favour his one good eye.

It isn't correct to say Joe is the only bartender in North America allowed to free pour, but he's probably the last doing it. "The law is you gotta give an ounce," he says. "You can give more, but you can't give less. They don't really specify how you go about it, so we give a lot more."

Liquor laws in the Yukon are relatively new, having arrived long after Europeans entered the area as trappers in the 1700s. Later, missionaries tried to limit the impact the loose morals and liquor habits of miners were having on the natives. In 1894, the Yukon got a commissioner; three years later, in the gold rush, the Yukon judicial district was created. The RCMP enforced Canadian liquor laws on a largely American population, which swelled from 5,000 to 30,000 during the rush. The Yukon commissioner remained basically in charge of liquor until the 1970s, when partisan politics arrived. Today's Yukon Liquor Corporation was born in 1977.

Old ways die hard in the land of the midnight sun, and nowhere is that more true than at Joe's. He makes drinks for his grey-haired regulars in a small seven-ounce glass, filling it three-quarters with spirits and adding a splash of pop or juice. Ask for more mix and Joe says he'll give you a bigger ten-ounce glass that he calls a "bucket," but word on the street is he'll kick you out. Don't ask for a pint of draught: Joe carries only two brands of bottled beer. And if you're a regular, the first drink is always free.

A joke sign on wall is disturbingly accurate: "Don't order doubles. They won't fit in the glass."

Joe's, previously called Sam McGee's Lounge, is a living museum of forgotten Klondike junk. Lights covered in 1900s-era lampshades cast a dark yellow glow. The walls are choked with donated stuff: eight old rifles (none work, says Joe), six knives and/or swords, two antique bullet displays, shovels, pickaxes, machetes, handcuffs, a bronze spittoon, magazine adverts, an old iron stove, and Joe's favourite, a black-and-white picture of a topless woman in bloomers. He calls the picture gold-rush soft-core porn.

Because the Yukon remains somewhat locked in another era, it contains some of North America's last gasps of true saloon culture. To sell booze, the law says you must also have rooms available to sleep in. In Dawson City, the RCMP is hoping to get a bylaw enacted to make it illegal to urinate on the street after bars close. And the Caribou Hotel in Carcross – first built in 1903, and famous for its liquor-drenched floors and its parrot, Polly, who (legend has it) came up the trail in 1898, sang opera and cussed, and then died at 125-years old – just lost its owner in a grizzly murder – somehow fitting for a place that looks out of the Wild West.

Joe knows times are changing and southern sensibilities are creeping in. On everyone's lips at Joe's is the city's new smoking ban in bars. Joe says he'll go down fighting, but figures he'll lose. "There's not many places like this left, with the owner behind the bar," he says, pouring a drink without measuring. "Eventually, we'll probably go out the way of the dinosaurs."

– Tim Querengesser

TIM QUERENGESSER

Baby John, family papers suggest, died suddenly of croup during his parents' visit with the Lambert side of the family in New York City. Their loss was sharply felt. This remarkable portrait commemorates, before the time of photography, the cherished bond between parent and child and, as John McGill's letter to the father of his namesake attests, the depth of family values in early nineteenth-century North America.

Watercolour and gouache on a 3.25-by-3.5-inch ivory oval, this portrait of John Crookshank was surely painted posthumously (artists were in fact at times called upon to take likenesses from the actual corpse). Mourning miniatures, as such, are not uncommon, but it is rare to have one of a child. John is shown in infant garb typical of the period, a white, lacy dress and bonnet with booties. He reclines on a Federal-style bedstead, the lush upholstery and drape and fluted neoclassical column in the background revealing the taste and economic status of the household. The colours are rich, the lace details exquisite. His eyes as blue as the ribbons in his bonnet and dress, he gestures playfully as he engages with the viewer. He is the epitome of innocence, revived for posterity, as it were, through the skill of the artist.

The miniature is signed "Meucci," referring to either Nina Meucci or her husband Anthony, immigrants from Italy in 1818 who were active in New York City from 1823 to 1825. The portrait of John travelled with the Crookshanks back to Toronto within months of their loss, no doubt lovingly displayed on one of the walls of their impressive and well-appointed Front Street residence – a poignant reminder of the acute love for a child departed.

More information on the Royal Ontario Museum is available at <www.rom.on.ca>.

May 25, 1925: Lighting the Falls

A switch is thrown and coloured lights splash across Niagara Falls for the first time. Hundreds of spectators, including forty reporters sent from New York on a special rail car, guests at a banquet at the Clifton Hotel, witness the spectacle.

"For a long moment no one spoke a word," one of them later wrote. "Then one of the men who had been most critical of the idea came over to Mr. Ryan, grasped his hand and exclaimed, 'You have successfully painted the lily.'"

Mr. Ryan – Walter D'Arcy Ryan, born in Kentville, Nova Scotia, April 17, 1870 – held the title of Illuminating Engineer, granted by his employer General Electric, which had created the first laboratory dedicated to illuminating engineering. He first arrived in Niagara Falls, New York, in 1907 to discuss his concept for a system to light the city's streets, and there announced his plan to light the falls, convincing both the American and Canadian sides to participate in the event.

The idea of lighting the falls was not new. In 1860, an Englishman created a display in honour of a visit by the Prince of Wales. It marked the first time the falls were lit at night, though the method (involving gunpowder) was not used again. To honour the visit in 1879 by Princess Louise and her husband, the Marquis of Lorne, governor general of Canada, the falls were again lit – this time using electricity to power arc lights. The system was used only on that occasion. Ryan's 1907 lighting of the falls was likewise a solo event. He designed a scheme to project the light through coloured gels while concealing the light source.

Public response to Ryan's scheme, at first skeptical, was overwhelmingly enthusiastic after he dazzled spectators. It prompted GE to open an office in nearby Schenectady, where Ryan was given a laboratory and staff to further explore his artistic science. There, Ryan perfected lighting systems for indoor and outdoor applications, from homes to factories.

One of the crowning achievements of his career was lighting the Panama Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco in 1915, to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal. For the centrepiece Tower of Jewels, Ryan ordered 130,000 hand-cut Austrian crystals that were hung on the tower. In daylight they caught rays of the sun as they moved in the breeze. At night, Ryan designed coloured lights to shine through them, creating a stunning display.

During World War I, Ryan's lab worked on military contracts to improve searchlights. That technology led to Ryan's plan to create a permanent lighting display at Niagara Falls. Two weeks after the switch was thrown May 25 in honour of Queen Victoria's birthday, the display was officially dedicated, featuring "illuminated floats ... coloured drills and fireworks." It was the first Festival of Lights in Niagara Falls, Ontario – a festival that still draws hundreds of visitors and residents.

– Andria Hill

RESTORATION

Let there be light

It's been three years since a historic chandelier came loose and smashed to the floor of the New Brunswick legislature, but this spring conservators hope to return the light to its rightful spot in the building. Known as the "south lady" to distinguish the light from its partner hanging at the north end of the building, the red brass chandelier is the focus of intense restoration.

Weighing several hundred pounds, the massive light was installed in Fredericton's capitol building in the 1880s. The New York lighting firm of Mitchell Vance made the elaborate light, more properly known as a gasolier for the fuel that originally powered it. In the early twentieth century the light was converted from gas to electric power.

Over the years, the south lady has received her share of nicks and chips, but the accident in 2002 left the lamp a twisted, wrecked mess. No one is certain what caused the light to plummet thirteen metres to the building's floor, but many aren't likely to forget the crash's noise any time soon. "It was an awful sound," recalled Loredana Catalli-Sonier, a legislative clerk. "According to staff, it just raised the hair on their backs."

Most of the chandelier's 574 spear-shaped prisms shattered in the crash, as did a number of the volleyball-sized, acid-etched glass globes. Repairing the chandelier is a challenge, even for the company selected to do much of the work, New Hampshire's Acu-Bright, which has fixed chandeliers across North America, including many damaged in the wake of 9/11 in New York. "Something like this, most people would throw out," said Keith Campbell, Acu-Bright's president. "It was pretty banged up, so trying to get all these nicks and dents out is a feat in itself."

Already, the province has spent $18,500 on the light's restoration, but Catalli-Sonier won't say what the final cost will be until all the repairs are complete. To date, Waterford Crystal in Ireland has manufactured a number of the larger prisms, and New Brunswick conservationist Nancy Reid, who has led the restoration efforts, found eight matching prisms on eBay. When people express concern over the cost of fixing the chandelier, Reid points out such lights cost about $2,000 in 1880. "They have been in use 365 days a year every day since then. I think we got our money's worth out of them."

NANCY REID

– Charles Mandel

WEBSITE

In the trenches

In January 1915, with what in hindsight seems like foresight, Sir Richard McBride, premier of British Columbia, hired American cinematographer D.J. Dwyer to film the training of Thirtieth Battalion and accompany them to England where they would enter the fracas eventually to become known as the Great War. A year later, Dwyer

BEAVER COLLECTION

was presenting his films to the Canadian public, and shortly after that he was recruited by the newly formed Canadian War Records Office. And so, Canadian battlefield cinematography was born. Or at least better nurtured. Dwyer's work found its way into the ten-reel 1935 production *Lest We Forget*, about Canada's role in World War I, and eventually landed in the lap of the National Film Board, the agency that replaced the CWRO. Fortunately, the NFB transferred the original, highly flammable, 35-millimetre nitrate stock to safety film before a destructive 1967 fire. Then there was the transfer to video, when video was the thing. And now – *ta-da!* – digitization. This month, the NFB is putting its World War I footage along with footage held by the National Archives of Canada and the Imperial War Museum in London on the web, about 100 sequences worth, with another 100 sequences to come in due course. (The portal is through the NFB's World War One website <**www.nfb.ca/ww1**/>.) Frame rates have been adjusted to reduce that sped-up, herky-jerky effect of old silent films, the material has been organized into chronological order, and many of Canada's noted historians have contributed text. Trench warfare is storied as cruel, but sometimes it takes a moving image to bring it home.

OLDWAYS

Sign language

Published in Toronto in 1896, John Maclean's *Canadian Savage Folk: The Native Tribes of Canada* includes instructions for the "gesture speech" he observed being used among aboriginal tribes. Next time you want to discuss, say, the weather, or tell someone you're hungry, rather than use words, try your hands.

The sign for **rain** is made by holding the hands in front of the shoulders, the fingers hanging down to represent the drops.

Lightning is represented by pointing the forefinger of the right hand upward, and bringing it down with great rapidity, with a sinuous motion, showing the course of the lightning....

The sign for **peace** is the palms of two persons made to approach each other. When it is intended to represent **speech**, the right hand is brought toward the mouth with the palm upward and pushed outward to mark the flow of the words. If, however, the speech has been made by a missionary or member of the medical priesthood, the idea of **holy** or **supernatural** must be expressed, and this is done by holding the hand in the same manner, or only two fingers separated and extended, and causing them to pass outward and upward from the mouth with a wavy motion. The idea of holy or supernatural is made by extending the forefinger, or all the fingers, of the right hand, with the back of the hand outward, and moving the hand from just in front of the forehead spirally upward nearly to arm's length, from left to right.

A **deceitful speaker** is represented as a man with a forked tongue, and is shown by bringing the right hand to the mouth with the back of the hand upward, the two forefingers extended and separated, pointing outward from the mouth.

A **liar** is shown by causing the palm of the right hand, with fingers pointing upward, to pass in front of the face from right to left.

A **man upon whom you cannot depend** is represented as a shifting heart; the sign for this character is the right hand held with the palm downward over the heart and the hand swayed gently, as if unstable in motion.

The sign for **shooting** is the palms of the hands placed together, the fingers of the left hand pointing outward and the fingers of the right hand pointing toward the right; the palms are brought down quickly several times, accompanied by an explosive action of the mouth, to express the report of a gun.

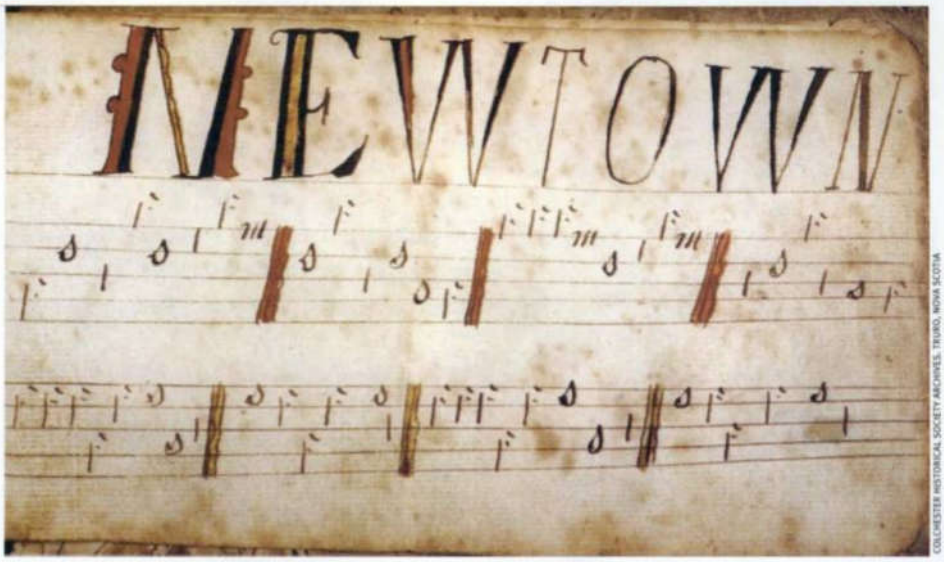
When a Plain Indian wishes to tell one, who does not understand his language, that he is **poor**, he turns his left hand closed, with the forefinger extended toward his body, and with his right hand closed and forefinger extended, draws the right forefinger over the top of the left, as if he were sharpening a pencil.

The gesture sign for **eating**, or **I am hungry**, is made by holding both hands toward the mouth with fingers pendant, and alternately raising the hands and letting them fall as if in the act of throwing something into the mouth.

Weeping is shown by holding the fingers of one or both hands toward the eyes, and making a motion as if the tears were running from the eyes down the cheeks.

A **long time** is represented by holding out the left arm, and drawing the point of the forefinger of the right hand from the hand towards the shoulder.

PAPER TRAIL

Music book

COLCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES, TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA

From a handwritten music book more than two hundred years old. The letters f, s, l, and m represent the tones.

One of the earliest links to the musical history of the Maritime region is a notebook that dates back to 1766. Titled "Mary Miller Her Book," the small, hand-copied manuscript contains thirteen psalm tunes and several colourful, childlike drawings. While knowledge of the book's provenance is not definitive, best guesses point to the eighteenth-century singing schools of the Planter settlers.

In the 1760s, New Englanders were offered land and granted passage to the colony of Nova Scotia in order to settle territory left vacant by the expulsion of the Acadians. Many of those who took the offer – called Planters – brought with them singing schools, a tradition born out of an early eighteenth-century reform movement in both Britain and North America. Clergy wanted their congregations to learn how to read music, so they set up tutorials that ran in the evenings two or three times a week during the fall and winter months. Tunebooks, often compiled by the singing-school teachers, were used to direct the studies.

Mary Miller's book is believed to have come from such a school. The two pages at the front, like most singing-school books of the time, are devoted to theoretical aspects of music, as well as to the fasola notational system – a method of solmization (using syllables to represent tones, like "do, re, mi") used in England and later in North America. It is likely that the tunes in this book were copied from several different sources, as no one published work with all thirteen tunes has ever been found. The tunes are all of Scottish origin, and all but one are in common metre. But much about this archival treasure remains a mystery. Its acquisition history is unknown, as is who made the transcriptions and the drawings. Even the identity of "Mary Miller" is yet to be discovered.

Our thanks to Nan Harvey, Archivist/Librarian at Colchester Historical Society Archives in Truro, Nova Scotia, for providing us with the image and information.

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May 3: To commemorate the day ninety years ago at Ypres, France, that John McCrae wrote "In Flanders Fields," possibly the most famous English poem written during World War I. Spare a moment for silence.

May 26: To observe the passage in Parliament in 1874 of an act introducing vote by secret ballot. Tick someone off.

Sean Mills on

Modern, postmodern, and post-postmodern

"And what is it that you do, son?" a friend's father asked me in a friendly tone. When I explained to him that I was working on a Ph.D. in Canadian history, he briefly hesitated, then responded: "Interesting ... but, isn't there something more relevant that you can spend your time doing?"

Becoming a historian at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a daunting task. For a student slowly making his or her way through the long and solitary journey of graduate school, the fractured field of Canadian history is both exhilarating and destabilizing. In scholarly journals, debates rage about the significance of history, about the merits of long-accepted approaches to studying the past, and about new methods and theoretical orientations.

Yet, alongside this excitement and energy sits a growing uneasiness: as historians have been honing their skills and developing ever more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of the past, the role that history plays in the lives of regular individuals is in sharp decline. One of the most eerie phenomena of our era, Eric Hobsbawm states in his masterful history *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, is the "destruction of the past." Most young people, he argues, now "grow up in a sort of permanent present lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in."

The feeling of living in a perpetual present, with little knowledge of or interest in the past, forms a part of what many theorists have described as the "conditions of postmodernity," the lived experience of the changing social and economic realities of the last forty years. If the modern period could be characterized by a faith in Progress and the triumph of Reason, then the postmodern age is exemplified by a growing skepticism and distrust of grand narratives that once explained both the past and the present and helped orient us towards the future.

This mood of skepticism, this distrust of totalizing explanations, this celebration of the partial and fractured nature of all knowledge, made quick inroads into the social sciences and the humanities. A new term, *postmodernism*, quickly emerged as a catchall phrase that sought to give coherence to a wide variety of artistic and philosophical trends.

No single essay could possibly explain the many ways in which the term *postmodernism* is used (and abused), but it can generally be said to refer to attacks on the belief that any objective truth can be known about the world. Postmodernists have therefore challenged the very foundations of social thought. They have sought, for example, to discard the idea that the individual self is autonomous and therefore capable of rationally choosing his or her destiny: rather than being innate or chosen, human identity is constructed through discourses. And they have challenged the belief that language can transparently and accurately describe the outside world: rather than presenting a one-to-one relationship with the objects it seeks to describe, language is always multireferential, always open to multiple readings and interpretations.

Postmodernists have also aimed their sights directly at historians' claims of objectivity. The past, many claim, does not come to us in the form of a story, with a clear beginning, middle, and an end. Rather, it is historians who decide which facts are included into history and which are left out. Following this logic, any historical study merely represents the perspective of its author, and displaces other equally "true" versions of the past. We therefore need to allow the flourishing of many perspectives, wide varieties of readings, multiple voices.

Postmodernism slowly made its way into academic history, not as a specific program or doctrine, but as a change in tone or a new mood. From the end of the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, social history had dominated academic studies of the past. The basic premise of this social history, or "history from the bottom up," was that the material world, and not the world of ideas, acted as the motor force behind historical change. But just when social history seemed to be living its hour of glory, this confidence in the material world, and in the possibility of objective history, slowly began to wane. In the late 1980s, many historians began challenging the social-history consensus. Drawing on postmodernist theories, historians started analyzing the hidden meanings in language, and began articulating the need for a new,

Postmodernism forced historians to be more aware of their own subjectivities and to recognize that writing from a particular position shaped what one saw in the past, and therefore influenced the type of history they produced.

more complicated understandin g of the workings of power.

Not all social historians gave in easily to the new trends, and many forcefully defended both their methods and their belief in the centrality of the material world in history. By the mid-1990s, however, it became clear that postmodernist-inspired historians had opened an important fracture in the foundations that had previously sustained social history. Out of the cracks emerged new questions, new methods, and new approaches to the past.

For one, postmodernism forced historians to be more aware of their own subjectivities. They were forced to recognize that writing from a particular position shaped what one saw in the past, and therefore influenced the type of history that an author produced. Historians also acquired the tools to recognize the constructed nature of words and classifications that they had previously taken for granted. Seemingly self-evident categories like "men" and "women," or "white" and "black," were shown to have been constructed in various ways at different points in history. Rather than being self-evident, the categories themselves became subject to historical scrutiny, and researchers generally found ample evidence to support their claims that the terms of reference were by no means natural or stable.

It is now almost twenty years since postmodernism first rippled the tranquil waters of academic history. While it is clear that it has brought us a great number of tools and methods that help us understand the past, postmodernist-inspired history is not without its flaws. While social historians often placed too much weight on the material world and too little on politics and ideology, the new history sometimes reverses the problem, seeing the entire world through the lens of language and representation and downplaying the role that economic conditions played in people's lives in the past (and present). Also, the jargon-laden language in which much of the new history is written seriously limits its appeal to a wider audience, having the unintended side effect of ensuring that this "democratic" history is often only understood by a small circle of specialists.

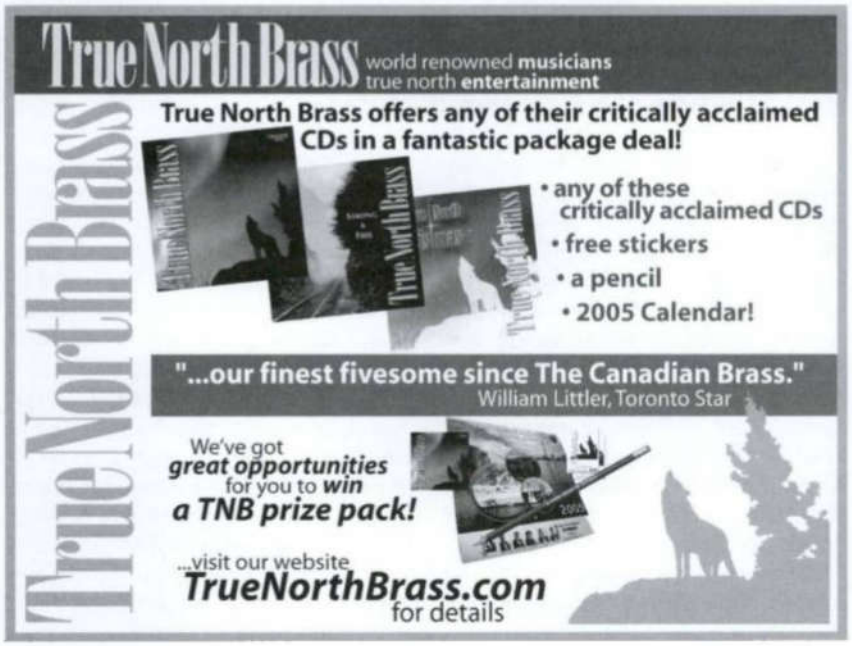
In hindsight, however, it is clear that, if nothing else, postmodernism has had an important impact on the world of academic history in that it provoked much rethinking of established methods and theories. Historians are now humbly resigned to the fact that they will never be able to come up with a definitive history, one that never needs to be revised. They know that a new generation will see things in the historical record that they could not, and that their histories will always remain partial and incomplete.

Perhaps because of historians' humbled aspirations, or because of the diminished role of the scholar, or even because of the lingering social-history tradition, historians today no longer ask the "big" questions that they once did. Under the conditions of postmodernity, historians have more modest goals. For a generation that cut its teeth in reaction to the conservative national history that came before it, this is perhaps unavoidable. Over the past forty years, historians have researched and discovered the incredible richness of the country's past. We now know more than we once thought possible about the lives of ordinary men and women, about their social conditions and about the subjective ways in which they formed their multifaceted identities. What we have largely lost, however, is any picture of the whole, any larger portrait that can give coherence to people's everyday experiences.

The new generation of emerging historians will not be able to avoid these larger questions. But when they turn their attention to the larger picture, following the lead of a few members of the older generation, they will not do so by repudiating either the social or the postmodernist-inspired history that went before them. The insights are too many, the evidence too compelling, the arguments too profound. Rather, they will build on their foundations, explore their strengths, and question their weaknesses.

Under the conditions of postmodernity, we know that history is, and always will be, an imperfect tool for understanding the past. But admitting that it is imperfect is not the same as claiming that it is useless. History is certainly a flawed tool for understanding the world around us, for giving coherence to the seeming incoherence of everyday life, but it is still the best tool that we have.

Sean Mills is a Ph.D. student at Queen's University. He is currently working on a political and intellectual history of Quebec during the 1960s.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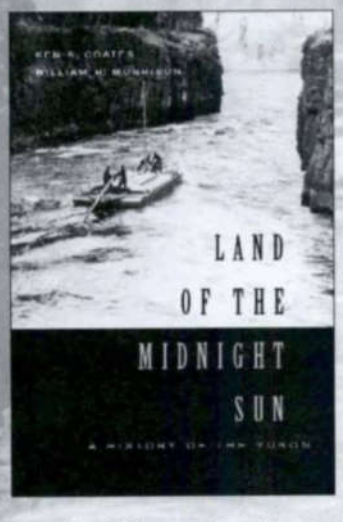

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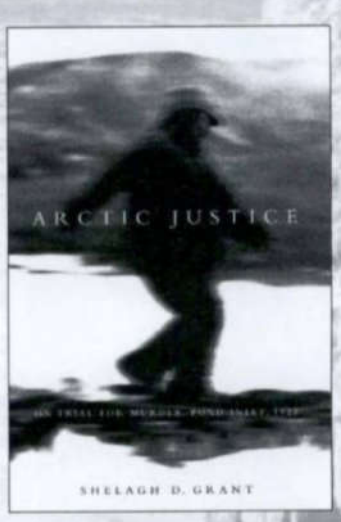

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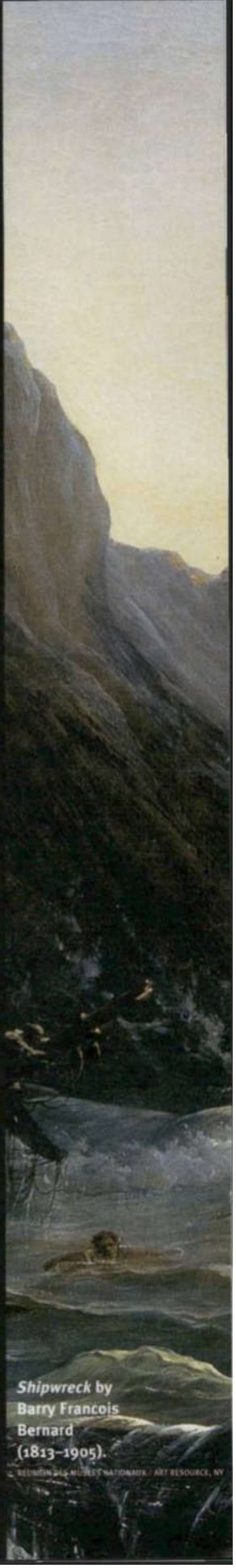
Luc de la Corne by an unknown artist.



Shipwreck by Barry Francois Bernard (1813–1905).

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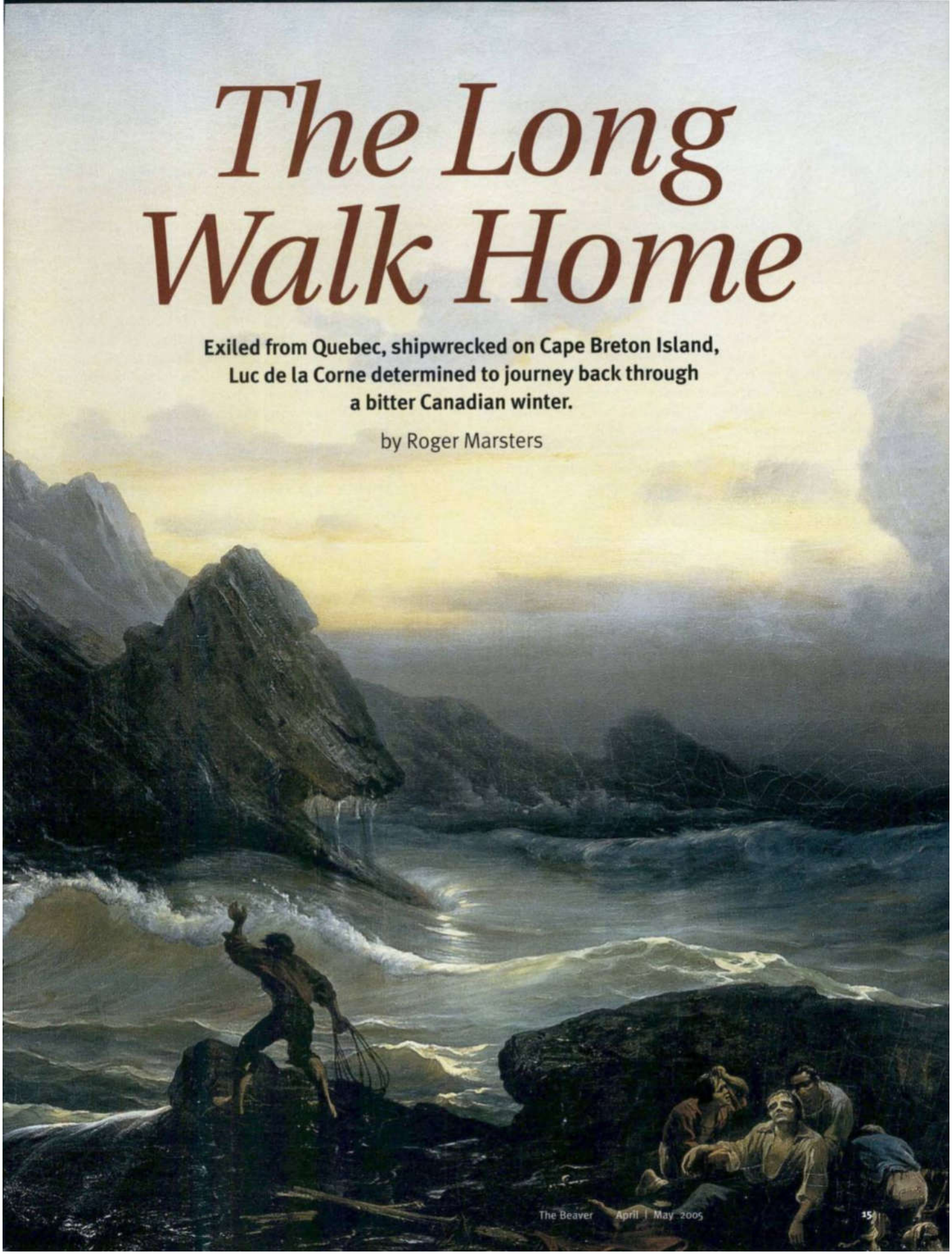
The Long Walk Home

Exiled from Quebec, shipwrecked on Cape Breton Island, Luc de la Corne determined to journey back through a bitter Canadian winter.

by Roger Marsters



A Family of the Micmac Indians with their Chief in Nova Scotia, circa 1801, oil on canvas by Hibbert Newton Binney (1766–1842).

On February 22, 1762, a worn, emaciated figure emerged from the darkness of the Canadian night and entered a small mill, the makeshift manor house of the seigneurie of Haberville. Ruined by the triumph of British forces that had shattered the old regime beyond recall, the d'Haberville family was wary of unknown visitors, especially of one so terrible looking, arriving unbidden long after dark. The unsettling stranger seemed "a veritable human spectre": "So deathlike was his pallor that one would have thought a vampire had sucked all the blood from his veins. His bones threatened to pierce his skin, which was yellow like that of a mummy; his dim and sunken eyes were vacant."

Jules d'Haberville, disturbed by the visitor's haggard appearance, nonetheless noted something familiar in his raw voice and offered him shelter for the night. To his shock, the stranger thanked him by name. Filled with terror and pity, d'Haberville recognized the ruined figure as his childhood friend, Luc de la Corne, merchant, traveller, and officer of the *Compagnies Franche de la Marine*, Chevalier of the Order of Saint Louis. While not quite a traveller from the other side of the grave, the news La Corne carried proved almost as terrible.

Resting by the fire with warm soup and a glass of d'Haberville's precious brandy, La Corne told how he had departed Montreal on September 27, 1761, a year after the city's capitulation to the British, accompanied by his two sons, his brother, and two nephews. They were bound for France, a country they had never seen in their lives. On October 15 they left Quebec's citadel behind, sailing in company with more than one hundred other souls in the *Auguste*, one of three ships carrying French and Canadien soldiers, merchants, and seigneurs into exile. All aboard knew it was late in the year to commence such a voyage, a season when fierce storms scoured the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the North Atlantic.

Despite appeals to General James Murray, the British commander at Quebec, the ships descended the treacherous St. Lawrence River without pilots, nearly wrecking in strong winds and currents the day after departing. By the first week of November, they reached the gulf, where they met a fierce gale that raged for days, scattering the ships, shambling the *Auguste*'s rigging, and hurling cargo about the decks, injuring several passengers. When the storm finally abated, *Auguste*'s galley repeatedly caught fire. Each time it was extinguished with difficulty, but from then on those aboard were forced to subsist on ship biscuit and water. Soon the undernourished and seasick passengers were struck by a general terror and retired below decks to suffer on their bare pallets.

After a brief calm in which lookouts spotted the rocky coast of Newfoundland, the wind returned, blowing out of the east and driving them towards the shore of Île Royale (Cape Breton Island). From November 11 to the 14, *Auguste* negotiated perilous shoals of the coast without navigational aids, carrying charts of European waters only. Lookouts remained vigilant, and the soldiers aboard stood watch with the increasingly overwrought crew. The ship had been mauled by the forces of the wind and sea – its foremast destroyed, its sails in tatters – and was becoming ever more difficult to manage. At last, on November 15, the exhausted crew despaired of survival, taking to their hammocks to wait for death.

As the wind drove the ship ever closer to the foaming breakers pounding against the shore, the captain and mate, aided by La Corne, tried to beach *Auguste* in a narrow stream they prayed might be navigable. It was not. Striking fast on the sandy bottom, the ship rolled on its side with the force of the seas. Frigid water flooded below decks. Those not drowned outright struggled to stay alive, clambering to the highest parts of the ship, lashing themselves to the spars and rigging. Some then leapt in the roiling water, desperate to get ashore, and were swept away; others, soaked and exhausted from exposure, slipped unresisting into the devouring surf.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-019199

Lawyer and writer Philippe Joseph Aubert de Gaspé (1786–1871) published in 1863 his historical novel *Les Anciens Canadiens*, which included the story of the wreck of the *Auguste* and Luc de la Corne's ordeal. An immediate success, the novel was reprinted many times, translated into English, and adapted for the stage.

Seeing *Auguste*'s hopeless position, La Corne took stock of the ship's boats. One had been splintered by the force of the waves, the other, "a mere cockle-shell," bobbed violently in the lee of the doomed ship. He lashed his sons to himself, preparing them to make the turbulent passage to this surviving craft; as he did, a freak wave struck, dropping La Corne in the tiny boat and tearing his boys from him, sweeping them away in the turbulent sea.

Dropped in a frail craft perilously overloaded with six other men, La Corne had no time to mourn. The rising surf took hold of the boat, casting it towards the shore and threatening to overturn it and its passengers into the sea. Driven onto the beach with his boat mates, La Corne immediately sought relief in action: "I had just seen my brother and my little ones snatched away, and I strove to keep down my agony of soul by striving for the safety of my fellow-sufferers." Using powder, flint, and steel salvaged from the stricken ship, he lit a fire for his numbed comrades, and then combed the beach for survivors washed ashore. He found none. Towards evening, *Auguste* came apart, littering the shore with a tangle of splintered timbers, ruined cargo, and battered, broken bodies.

"Accursed be the tyrant who in the bitterness of his hate against the French sent so many good men to their death in

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-019135

At a crucial hour after the shipwreck, Luc de la Corne and his starving compatriots encountered Micmac who helped them with provisions and transportation on Cape Breton Island.

an old ship utterly unseaworthy," proclaimed Jules d'Haberville as the castaway completed his tale. Then, not content to rest from his ordeal beside the warm fire of d'Haberville's humble manor house, La Corne rose to continue his journey, eager to "present himself before Murray at Quebec as a living protest against the vindictive cruelty which had sent to their deaths so many brave soldiers, so many unoffending women and little ones."

Here, rage against the cruelty and injustice of the conqueror is palpable and real. The impoverished seigneur who voices it, however, is not. The isolated manor house where La Corne's tale was told, and the d'Haberville family that heard it, are the literary creations of Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé, fifth and last seigneur of Saint-Jean-Port Joli, one of the pioneers of Canadian literature.

Aubert de Gaspé was born at Quebec in 1786, eldest son of a legislator who had distinguished himself militarily during the American rebels' 1775 siege of Quebec. Educated at the Quebec Seminary, he rose to social prominence before huge debts (incurred as a result of his well-known "liberality") forced him to leave Quebec society. He retreated to the countryside where he lived for fourteen years, developing a deep love and respect for the people and rich folk culture of rural Quebec that would nourish his literary work in later years.

Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé's pioneering historical novel, *Les Anciens Canadiens*, in which the foregoing account of Auguste's tragic loss appears, presents a wide-ranging portrait of Canada's idyllic pre-Conquest society and of its brutal destruction in the Seven Years' War. For the author, as for many of his contemporaries, responsibility for this catastrophe was not difficult to assign. As Jules Haberville exclaims in anguish, it was James Murray, embittered and seeking revenge for his loss to the French at the 1760 Battle of Ste-Foy, who ultimately set in motion *Auguste*'s tragedy of exile.

Aubert de Gaspé's *seigneurie* of Haberville was imagined, but the rage voiced there against the conqueror was very real. Real, too, was the figure of Luc de la Corne and the ordeal he suffered. The La Corne family was in fact one of Canada's wealthiest and most distinguished on the eve of the Seven Years' War. Luc was born at Contrecoeur, forty-five kilometres from Montreal, in 1711, part of a generation of venturesome, native-born soldiers and traders who sought their fortunes in the West following La Vérendrye's explorations. He traded for furs at Detroit, Michilimackinac, Sault Ste. Marie, and at Nipigon, outfitting far-flung posts and reaping huge profits in return. On the eve of the Conquest, Luc de la Corne possessed a fortune of some 1,200,000 *livres*, making him one of the richest men in the colony.

He was also a hardened wilderness traveller, soldier, and military leader. In 1742 La Corne was promoted to ensign for his conspicuous bravery against English forces at Fort Clinton, New York. By 1758 he was a captain of the regular colonial *Compagnies Franches de la Marine*, with expertise leading France's First Nations allies against the British. He knew the

customs of several aboriginal nations well and spoke their languages – knowledge that benefitted him greatly in the ordeals that lay before him. After the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, he distinguished himself further, leading guerrilla attacks against an enemy supply convoy at Fort Lydius, New York, for which he was awarded the cross of the Order of Saint Louis. Henceforth (like his equally distinguished brother Louis) he bore the title *Chevalier* de la Corne. After the fall of Quebec, he continued to fight, suffering wounds in the battle against General Murray's forces at Ste-Foy in April 1760.

La Corne's martial talents, vital to his success in pre-Conquest Canada, did not bode well for his future in a colony occupied by the British, however. The terms of capitulation signed at Montreal made this clear. Hoping for a mitigation of the outcome of the war, he had delayed his departure from the colony as long as possible, as had most of the officers, mer-

Luc de la Corne's journey, 1761–1762. From November 17, 1761, following the wreck of his ship on the shore of Île Royale, La Corne walked overland through the depths of winter and often faint with hunger, arriving in Quebec February 1762.

chants, and seigneurs identified in La Corne's 1778 *Journal du Voyage de M. Saint-Luc de la Corne dans le Navire l'Auguste* (the source upon which Aubert de Gaspé based his account of the wreck). Indeed, despite the convictions of Aubert de Gaspé's narrator, it was the Canadiens' desire to remain in their homeland as long as possible, rather than Murray's purported vindictiveness, that resulted in Auguste's perilously late departure in the autumn of 1761.

When he found himself cast away on the unmarked coast of Île Royale in mid-November, La Corne's martial experience and wilderness skill were all that stood between him and certain death. Of the 121 people who had boarded *Auguste* at Quebec, only seven lived to see the sun rise on Aspy Bay, near the northernmost tip of Île Royale, on November 16: La Corne, Auguste's captain, three soldiers, and two servants. La Corne immediately assumed leadership of his shocked comrades, enjoining them to gather provisions from the horrid debris at the sea's edge and to prepare to march in search of refuge. The captain judged that they had wrecked somewhere in the vicinity of the fortress of Louisbourg, captured from the French at the outset of the war in 1758. Their best hope lay in seeking refuge with the garrison there.

They left the wreck site, the "place of death" as La Corne called it, on November 17. They pushed inland without clear direction, climbing steep cliffs, forcing their way through dense bush, making long detours around rushing streams to cross icy fords. After four days, the men refused to continue walking; La Corne cajoled them to resume their journey. Two days later they found a group of huts at Niganiche (modern-day Ingonish) tenanted by corpses, apparently victims of starvation. Here one of the servants fell sick and was forced to remain, another man volunteering to stay with him. When the rest of the survivors departed the next day, they vowed to send help from the first settlement they reached. The two men were never seen alive again.

Deep snow fell the next night, further obscuring their progress through the trackless forest. The bedraggled survivors' daily ration consisted of little more than an ounce of lard or flour, shreds of seaweed and a few berries they tellingly called "gratte-cul." La Corne records that the four men still with him soon lost their will to survive, continuing to walk only because he drove them to do so. When they reached St. Anne's Bay on the Bras d'Or Lake a few days later, his persistence seemed to pay off: they found a small boat abandoned on the shore there. Missing three planks and weakened by rot, they set to work making it as seaworthy as possible. When they prepared to launch the frail, patched craft, La Corne's comrades, feverish and covered with sores, despaired of trusting their lives to it and again refused to continue.

As the stricken travellers descended into gloom and La Corne paused to consider their options, help came unbidden. Two Micmac men emerged from the forest and were greeted hysterically: the castaways ran to them, "tears blocking their speech, their voices as from the grave, interrupted by sobs as they formed with difficulty the words *have pity on us.* January was a lean time in the cycle of Micmac life, the beginning of the long winter season when survival depended on the uncertain fortunes of the hunt. Nevertheless, as was their custom, the men shared their supply of dried meat with the strangers, relieving the castaways' immediate distress.

La Corne had known Micmacs before, but relates that the men did not recognize him at first because of his emaciation,

his long beard, and haggard appearance. They agreed to assist nonetheless, fetching provisions and bark canoes in which to carry the strangers to the settlement of Port Toulouse in southeastern Île Royale, where a narrow portage separated the inland Bras d'Or lakes from the Atlantic. Port Toulouse (modern-day St. Peters) was undoubtedly well known to the Micmac guides, being a traditional place of exchange with the French prior to the Conquest when, in the words of historian Olive Dickason, their nation acted as "the guerrilla arm of Louisbourg."

In late 1761 Port Toulouse consisted of five houses occupied by ten resident Acadians, remnants of a people cruelly expelled from their ancestral homes in the years since 1755. The Micmac guides left *Auguste*'s weary survivors to their care. After resting for two days, La Corne became restless, eager to resume travelling. Despite the many ordeals he and his comrades had suffered, he stated his intention to return overland immediately to Canada, to his "patrie." La Corne's fellow travellers wished only to proceed to the nearest town, to safety and comfort. To walk overland from Île Royale to Montreal in the thick of a bitter Canadian winter was, to them, madness. *Auguste*'s captain tried desperately to talk La Corne out of it, but to no avail.

On December 13, 1761, he left Port Toulouse in the company of two Acadian guides paid to accompany him, and crossed the Strait of Canso by canoe to Chedabucto on the Nova Scotian mainland. Purchasing snowshoes from the native inhabitants there, he and his guides set out westward in bitter weather, finding the First Nations inhabitants at Pommiquet (Pomquet) and Antigogné (Antigonish) on the verge of starvation. Reaching Tectemigouche (Tatamagouche) on Christmas Eve, "biens fatigués," La Corne and his companions found themselves too weak to proceed any further. They rested for several days, waiting for their strength to return. As their meagre provisions dwindled, they sent a messenger to the British garrison at Fort Cumberland (the French Fort Beauséjour until its fall in 1755), giving an account of their journey and asking for supplies. On January 6 they were reduced to killing and eating a fox, the flesh of which they found "disgusting."

Fort Beauséjour had been founded by the French in the early 1750s, part of the militarization of the Acadia–Nova Scotia frontier undertaken in large part by Louis de la Corne through the years of low-level conflict preceding the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. After its fall, the fort became headquarters for the troops enforcing the expulsion of the local Acadians and supporting military action against insurgents on the nearby Petitcodiac and Memramcook Rivers. La Corne was undoubtedly relieved, then, when he and his party were escorted to the post and warmly welcomed by the fort's entire community, its "commander, officers, bourgeois, merchants." He received, he notes with evident satisfaction, all the "douceurs" the fort had to provide.

Finding himself sated by the relative luxuries of the British post, La Corne took to the road again, proceeding westward from the Chignecto Isthmus, along portages through the recently disputed Acadian lands, to the valley of the St. John River, following the traditional overland route between Acadia and Quebec long travelled by soldiers, First Nations fighters, and priests. Along the river he met with Charles Germain, Jesuit and former militant supporter of the Acadians and their First Nations allies, now charged with reconciling his flock to British rule. The priest generously provided La Corne with supplies sufficient for him to continue his journey northward, to the Grand Falls of the St. John River and beyond to Lake Temiscouata, leading from northernmost Acadia to the St. Lawrence. Here La Corne left his Acadian guides behind. Here, too, he passed from history into literature, presenting himself, ragged, lean, and hungry, to the imagination of Philippe-Joseph Aubert de Gaspé, and through him to the inhabitants of the ravaged seigneurie of Haberville.

In Gaspé's account, *Les Anciens Canadiens*, La Corne presses forward with his journey to see General Murray at Quebec, having enjoyed the d'Habervilles' hospitality for but a single evening. The British commander, who had "carelessly consigned so many brave officers to their doom just because the sight of their uniforms displeased him," is conscience-stricken at the terrible fate that had befallen those he had sent away in the *Auguste* the preceding autumn. Instantly, Murray is converted from being the scourge of the Canadiens to their protector, respectful henceforward of their religion, laws, and customs. La Corne in particular became "the special object of his favour" and was allowed to remain in the colony, immediately setting to work repairing his fortunes.

Murray did indeed grow to respect the Canadiens and to protect their customs, laws, and religion.[1] It seems unlikely, however, that La Corne either was or remained his favourite for long. The old soldier's political attitudes and fortunes in post-Conquest Canada were as rough and variable as his hard passage from Aspy Bay to Quebec. Returning to Montreal, La Corne simultaneously formed alliances with prominent British military officers and used his influence with his First Nations friends to foment discontent against the occupying forces. During the Revolutionary War, he both negotiated with invading American forces and led forces against the rebels in New York. As bold in the face of political change as he was in the depths of the Canadian winter, he fought to regain his place in colonial society. At his death in October 1784, La Corne was again a respected citizen, a legislative councillor, and a wealthy man. He had, against great odds, repaired his fortunes.

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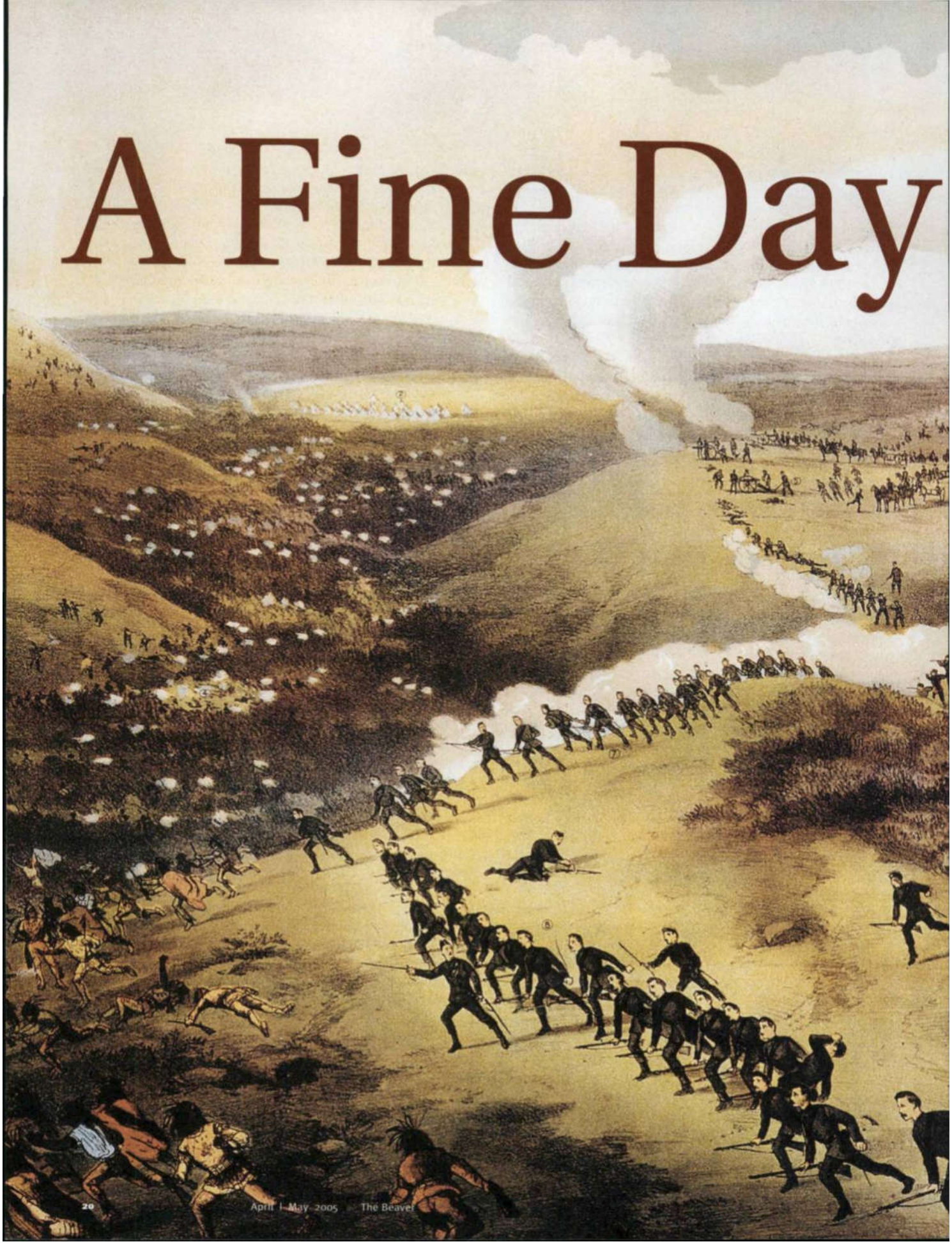
[1] For further information on James Murray's relations with French Canada see "Tartan and *Pure Laine*," page 14 in the February/March 2005 edition of the *Beaver*.

A Fine Day



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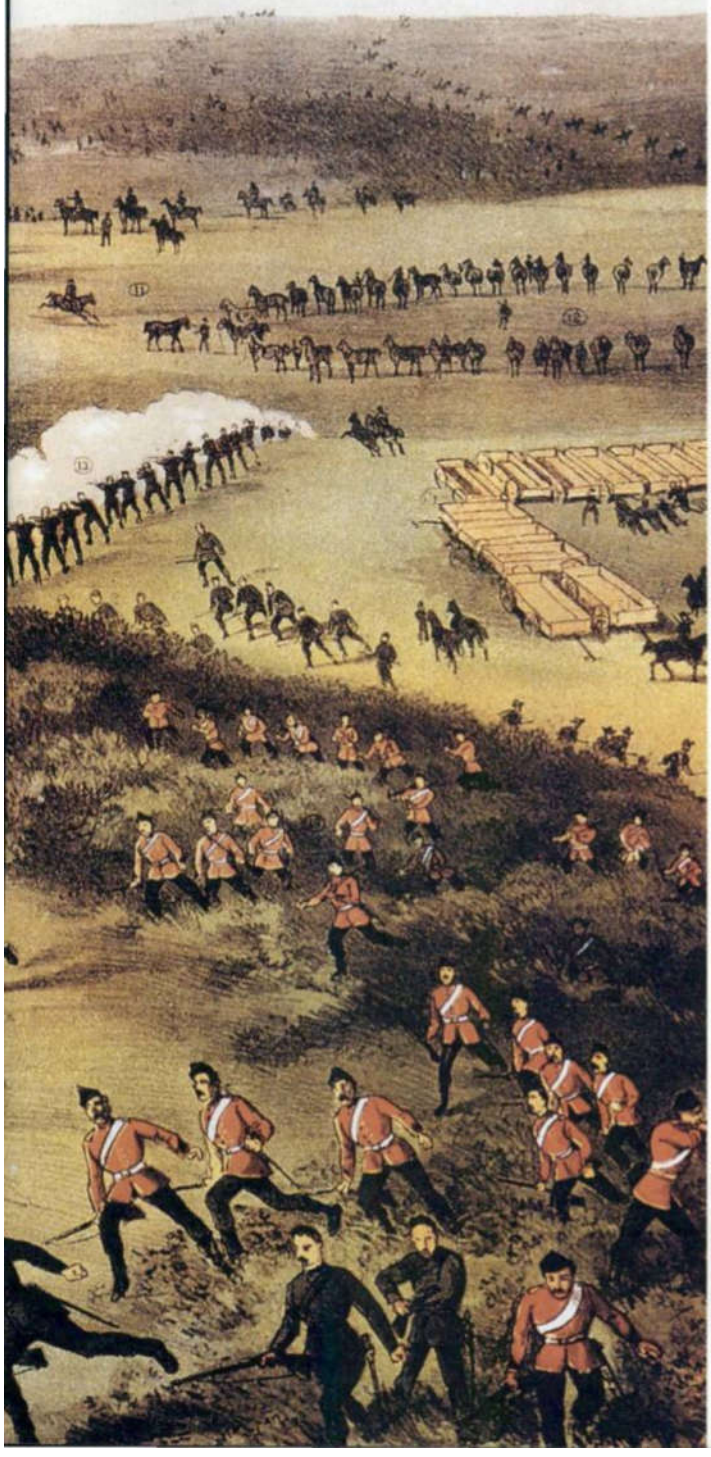

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

For the Cree, the Battle of Cut Knife Hill, 120 years ago this spring, was a great victory. But it was also a last hurrah.

by Heather Robertson

Poundmaker First Nation, Saskatchewan, May 11, 2004: I am standing on a high, hoof-shaped bluff on the south side of the Battle River. The snow has gone, but a bitter northwest wind ruffles the dead grass. Skeletal tepee poles mark the grave of Chief Poundmaker, exhumed from his grave at Blackfoot Crossing in 1967 and buried here, on the reserve land he chose for his people in 1879. On this bare prairie, on May 2, 1885, Poundmaker and his warriors repulsed a force of 325 Canadian troops led by Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter. It was the only battle the Cree fought during the Northwest Rebellion, and their victory brought them cruel punishment.

The view from the battlefield to the north is a panorama of the Battle River valley, the river flowing east through a floodplain of marshes and brown thickets of willow, chokecherry, and aspen flushing green with young leaves. To the south, the great round knob of Cut Knife Hill rises into the grey sky; between the hill and the bluff where I stand, Cut Knife Creek twists its tortuous way to the Battle River through deep, wooded gullies. Apart from the grave, the band office, a Heritage Canada stone cairn, and a few small signs, the landscape has changed little in nearly 120 years; in fact, it is more deserted and silent than it was in the early spring of 1885, when several thousand Cree living along the

The Battle of Cut Knife Creek. **This colour lithograph, published by the Grip Company in 1885, shows the Queen's Own Rifles on the morning of May 2, 1885, charging into the forest to flush out the Cree. The natives, however, retreated deeper into the woods, returning again to harass the soldiers. Knowing they could not win, Colonel Otter ordered the soldiers' withdrawal; Chief Poundmaker allowed their retreat.**

river travelled regularly on foot or by wagon to the little settlement of Battleford, about eighty kilometres downriver, to visit the traders or collect their hated government rations of bacon, flour, and tea.

As I look down on the old river trail to Battleford, I feel a ghostly presence. Fine Day, Poundmaker's war chief, sits, motionless, on a horse. He wears a buffalo horn headdress trimmed with ermine skin; his broad-boned face and naked, muscular torso are painted with a mixture of white clay and charcoal, shades of the morning mists that rise from the creek. He carries a brightly decorated spear; a rifle is slung across his back. As dawn breaks on the clear, cloudless morning of May 2, 1885, Fine Day glimpses the Mounties' eight wagons carrying food, hay, ammunition, and nearly three hundred tired, hungry, half-frozen infantrymen straggle along the scrubby riverbank. Before him, to his surprise and fury, lies the refuse of Poundmaker's deserted campsite; ahead, a tempting trail leads to certain ambush.

Otter has disobeyed orders to remain at Battleford while reconnoitring the country. He has never fought a battle in northern Saskatchewan, or anywhere else; in 1866, he, with the rest of his militia company of Queen's Own Rifles, ran away from a skirmish with American Fenians in southern Ontario. Fewer than half his men are career soldiers or police; the rest are, in the words of one of them, "undisciplined ragamuffins," city lads who joined militia regiments

"Little by little they surrounded the soldiers. At each cannon shot

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA-139231

Edgar Dewdney (shown here with his wife Jane at Government House, Regina) was appointed lieutenant governor of the North-West Territories in 1881. In the aftermath of the North-West Rebellion, he favoured strong punishment of the participants and encouraged John A. Macdonald to carry out the death sentence passed on Louis Riel.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA-28937

Kah-Me-Yo-Ki-Sick-Way, known in English as "Fine Day," was the military leader of the Cree at Cut Knife Hill, and renowned as a scout and a runner as well as a warrior.

PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF ALBERTA / B-[illegible]

Lief Crozier (1846–1901), district commander of the North-West Mounted Police at Battleford, was not noted for tact and diplomacy. Easily provoked, he led government forces into the first battle of the North-West Rebellion, at Duck Lake, leaving Battleford unprotected.

red coats, the glint of rifles and guns, and hears, as his scouts have reported all night, the neighing and creaking of Otter's wagon train as it slogs over the muddy trail. At sunrise, he sees the column come to a halt; the soldiers have reached the mouth of Cut Knife Creek, the site of the Cree's fishing camp until they had abandoned it the day before to take refuge beneath Cut Knife Hill. Fine Day watches the soldiers scurry around; their chiefs peer up at him with their spyglasses. Softly singing his war song, Fine Day fades into the mist.

Looking up, Colonel Otter sees, on his left flank, a steep escarpment of bare hills beginning to glow ochre in the rising sun; on his right is the Battle River. Behind him, forty-

for status, sports, and booze-ups in the mess. They have never seen combat or shot at anything more dangerous than a duck.

Luckily, Otter's scouts, having spotted Poundmaker's new camp from the top of a high, hoof-shaped bluff nearby, report the Cree to be asleep. The artillery's two seven-pound cannon, placed on lip of the bluff, could shred the tepees, with the rapid-fire Gatling gun mowing the inhabitants down as they fled. The infantry would move in to mop up, and force Poundmaker to surrender.

The drawback to this strategy is that to reach the bluff, Otter's guns, ammunition, and troops must ford Cut Knife Creek, then struggle uphill through a kilometre of swamp

and tangled underbrush on the other side. Nevertheless, they advance, their splashing, trampling, cursing, and shouting echoing through the hills. On Cut Knife Hill, Poundmaker, wrapped in a white cloak, his war club, studded with nails and knives by his side, watches them through his own telescope, sending signals with a small mirror.

Otter's cannons were not yet in position when rifle shots rang out from the gully in front, and bullets whizzed around the gunners' heads. As the infantry fanned out to the right and left, gunfire and bloodcurdling war whoops came from the coulees below. The soldiers returned the fire, but the Cree, invisible in the thick underbrush, moved rapidly from place to place, throwing blankets and clothing into the air to distract enemy fire. "Little by little they surrounded the soldiers," wrote Father Louis Cochin, who was in the Cree camp. "At each cannon shot they replied by joyful cries, joined with ironical exclamations. Many seemed to be so little aware of the danger that they loaded their guns with their pipes in their mouths."

A Cree rush to capture the Gatling gun was beaten off, but the gun merely spewed its bullets harmlessly over the warriors' heads, and Otter's cannon fell silent when their rotted wooden carriages collapsed. The infantry, exposed to withering fire from all sides, flattened themselves on the ground, lying so still one observer reported them to be "sleeping."

"One bullet struck the earth a few inches from my head," Lieutenant Richard Cassels of the Queen's Own Rifles wrote later in his diary. "At one time I was lying down with my sword resting on my hip and shining brightly in the sun; some fellow evidently saw this and fired three shots at me. The last time he nearly had me and I quietly adjourned."

By late morning it was obvious, even to Otter, that his troops were trapped by a Cree force he estimated to be five hundred warriors; he would have to retreat, under fire, across Cut Knife Creek. Miraculously, the Cree held their fire and did not pursue. Otter's wagons carried eight dead and fourteen wounded; another man was missing. The Cree had six dead and three wounded out of about two to three hundred warriors, and some had fought with bows and arrows.

they replied by joyful cries, joined with ironical exclamations.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-[illegible]

William Otter (1843–1929) commanded the Battleford column of the North-West Campaign of 1885. Defeat of his forces at Cut Knife Hill didn't hinder his military career. In 1899, he was appointed to lead the first Canadian contingent in the South African War.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA-[illegible]

Sandhurst-educated, Frederick Dobson Middleton (1825–1898) was a veteran of the 1857 Indian Mutiny before his 1884 appointment as commander of the Canadian Militia. He organized and led the expedition against the North-West Rebellion of 1885.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-[illegible]

Poundmaker, born around 1842, first opposed, then accepted Treaty No. 6, which in 1876 ceded control over Cree territory in central Saskatchewan and Alberta to the Canadian government. Though he did not take part at Cut Knife Hill, he stopped his warriors from pursuing the retreating forces. Tried for treason in July 1885, he served less than one year.

Back in Battleford, Otter bragged that he had killed more than thirty Cree (the press raised it to one hundred); he described his expedition variously as a "flying column," a "reconnaissance in force," and a "surprise attack." His excuses are incredible. What really motivated this inept, ill-fated expedition?

When Otter and his troops had marched into Battleford on April 24, he found a community in chaos; some five hundred people, three hundred of them women and children, had been living in terror in the small mounted police post, Fort Battleford, for three weeks; the surrounding farms and villages had been pillaged and burned, settlers

had been murdered, and a huge war party of Cree, led by Big Bear and Poundmaker, was expected to besiege the fort momentarily.

Otter's troops dug in, but nothing happened: the Cree remained far to the west. The soldiers, primarily concerned only with their own comfort, stole everything that remained, including newspaper editor P.G. Laurie's cook stove, while angry civilians insisted that Poundmaker be punished for every crime and misfortune.

What had Poundmaker done? He had spoken out against signing Treaty 6 in 1876. When the government negotiator began describing how land would be reserved for the Indians, Poundmaker protested, "This is our land! It isn't a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces back to us. It is ours and we will take what we want." He insisted that the government help the Cree in times of famine and pestilence, plagues already upon them.

Poundmaker's resistance won him a large following – he already had a reputation as an orator and peacemaker – but the government tagged him a troublemaker, one of the "worst" of the "bad Indians." Poundmaker laboured diligently to till his fields and set an example for others, but the Cree knew nothing about agriculture, and when frost and drought killed their crops, the government imposed a punitive work-for-rations policy. By the spring of 1885, the sick, starving Cree had bitter grievances about broken treaty promises, but no common political cause with the Métis agitation led by Louis Riel. Nevertheless, the government feared that an "Indian uprising" would accompany Riel's messianic "war of extermination" throughout the Northwest.

The biggest troublemaker in the Battleford area was volatile Lief Crozier, district commander of the North-West Mounted Police. The summer before, Crozier had nearly provoked a riot on the Poundmaker reserve by attempting to arrest a band member during a sacred Thirst Dance. Poundmaker and Big Bear had to restrain hundreds of painted warriors, ecstatic from days of fasting and dancing, so Crozier and his men could leave with their prisoner and their lives. Crozier's narrow escape confirmed his conviction that "Indians are to be dreaded."

Yet, on March 13, 1885, Crozier took three-quarters of his eighty-man force from Fort Battleford to Fort Carlton, a decrepit, indefensible Hudson's Bay Company post closer to the Métis headquarters at Batoche, leaving Battleford's anxious settlers virtually unprotected. The Métis, interpreting Crozier's move as an imminent attack, seized and fortified a small trading post at nearby Duck Lake; on March 26, Crozier set out with fifty-two police and forty-three settlers to retake the post. The Métis were waiting in ambush. After a brief, fierce battle, Crozier's party was allowed to escape; twelve of his men were dead, eleven wounded. Crozier immediately evacuated Fort Carlton, torched it, and fled to the town of Prince Albert, where, with one hundred fresh NWMP reinforcements, he holed up.

Word of the fight at Duck Lake quickly reached Battleford by telegraph, Poundmaker by courier. What would happen now? On March 28, Poundmaker, with aged Chief Little Pine, set out with an entourage of warriors to meet with the Indian agent, John Rae, in Battleford. They sent a message ahead asking for tea and tobacco, a signal they were coming in peace, and as they plodded through the slush, they were joined by a crowd from Sweetgrass and Lucky Man reserves, including some women riding in wagons. But when they reached the agent's office on March 30, they found it locked and empty: Rae, too, had taken refuge in Fort Battleford across the river.

Many seemed to be so little aware of the danger that they loaded

Spies had reported Poundmaker's delegation to be a war party, and the night before Rae had telegraphed to Regina: "All are armed in war paint. Expect to attack to night." Some of the rural families streaming into the fort had been threatened and robbed by native gangs, and they reported that a farm instructor and rancher in the area had been murdered. Battleford's only magistrate, Charles Rouleau, bundled his family into his buckboard and galloped off to safety in Swift Current, leaving the community lawless as well as defenceless.

The Cree camped and waited all day, but Rae refused to cross the river to meet their chiefs. Cold, hungry, humiliated, the Cree trashed the abandoned shacks on the flats and took what they fancied. Then they went home.

During the next several days, the fort's inhabitants, including the police, peered timidly through their rough log stockade as a rowdy mob, mostly Métis, looted and burned homes and stores, firing their rifles into the air. Then horrifying news came that at Frog Lake, Big Bear's Cree had massacred nine men, including the Indian agent and two priests, and taken the survivors hostage. Now Big Bear was on the road to Fort Battleford, and the only obstacle in his way was a twenty-five-man police detachment at Fort Pitt. On April 22, a leaky, laden barge came floating down the icy North Saskatchewan River to Battleford: it was the Fort Pitt police. They had abandoned the fort to Big Bear; the post's civilians had surrendered.

The telegraph wires to Regina had been humming with hysterical pleas for a military expedition to "relieve" Battleford since Poundmaker's visit on March 30. By the time Otter arrived, without firing a shot, the people of Battleford were out for blood. "The Indians have proved themselves to be fully as savage and unreasonable as they were before the

attempt to civilize them was made," *Saskatchewan Herald* editor P.G. Laurie ranted on April 23. "Untamed and untamable, they turn on the hand that fed them. Providence has decreed their disappearance and that they should give place to another race. They have, in the wildest and most unprovoked manner, and with the basest treachery, begun a war of desolation such as has never been equalled in the history of Canada."

Otter, pressured on all sides to attack Poundmaker, succumbed to the temptation to lead a "war on terrorism." His defeat only added to the panic. But Poundmaker was also having political troubles: his camp was crowded with refugees, including suspicious Métis and

their guns with their pipes in their mouths." –Father Louis Cochin

two Assiniboine wanted for murder. Riel's agents made converts among young warriors keen to fight, but Poundmaker retreated. A day after the battle of Cut Knife Hill, he moved his camp south to an unpopulated area of hills and lakes where the Cree could pasture the cattle they had liberated from the abandoned farms, and protect themselves from attack. On the way, they intercepted a wagon train loaded with supplies for Otter's troops; the teamsters surrendered, and the Cree feasted on whisky and delicacies from Toronto's finest shops.

When word reached the camp on May 19 that Riel had surrendered following the Métis defeat at Batoche, Poundmaker sent an emissary, his farming instructor Robert Jefferson, to victorious General Frederick Middleton. Middleton's harsh reply dashed any hopes of negotiation: "I have men enough to destroy you and your people, or at least drive you away to starve, and will do so unless you bring in the teams you took, and yourself and councillors to meet me at Battleford, with your arms." Surrender would be unconditional.

Father Cochin, acting as interpreter, attended the great council where the Cree debated their fate. From his *Reminiscences*, opinion seems to have been in favour of armed resistance when Poundmaker stood up and spoke:

> You all, as many as you are, behold me. ... Listen well to what I will tell you. ... See all these women; see all these children; see all these young people who surround you. They are the ones we must save. I know that you are brave. In fighting against the whites you can hinder them very much. But we will yield to the number, and something tells me that our children will have their lives safe. I prefer to surrender myself at the risk of being hung rather than to shed streams of blood.

On May 26, Poundmaker, with about a dozen of his councillors, humbly submitted to Middleton at Battleford. He was insulted as a "liar" and "squaw," arrested, jailed, and tried in August for treasonous felony. Poundmaker was found guilty, as expected, but he took advantage of his right to speak before being sentenced. He said defiantly:

> I am not guilty. ... I am glad of my works in the Queen's country this spring. ... When my brothers and the pale faces met in the fight at Cut Knife Hill I saved the Queen's men. ... Everything I could do was done to prevent bloodshed. Had I wanted war, I would not be here now. I would be on the prairie. You did not catch me. I gave myself up. You have got me because I wanted peace.

Poundmaker was sentenced to three years in the Manitoba penitentiary. "I would prefer to be hung at once," he protested, an opinion shared by the *Herald*'s P.G. Laurie. However, Father Cochin and others vouched for Poundmaker's good conduct towards them, and he was released from prison after only a few months; he died, still in his forties, in July 1886, at the home of his adoptive Blackfoot father, Chief Crowfoot.

Colonel Otter received a scathing reprimand from General Middleton and a hero's welcome in Toronto; he was promoted eventually to brigadier-general and knighted in 1913. Fine Day and his family slipped away into the Sand Hills to the south, then crossed the U.S. border into Montana. The next year, when Canada declared an amnesty, they returned to live quietly on the Sweetgrass reserve. War chief Fine Day became a patriarch, teacher, and shaman, keeper of the "old ways," especially the outlawed Thirst Dance, at a time when the Battle River Cree suffered grievous persecution. As a wise old man, Fine Day willingly shared his spiritual visions and stories of his youthful raids with anthropologists, but he never told them about his triumph at Cut Knife Hill.

Heather Robertson writes from King City, Ontario. She is currently working on a book about Canadian explorer and geographer J.B. Tyrrell.

ET CETERA

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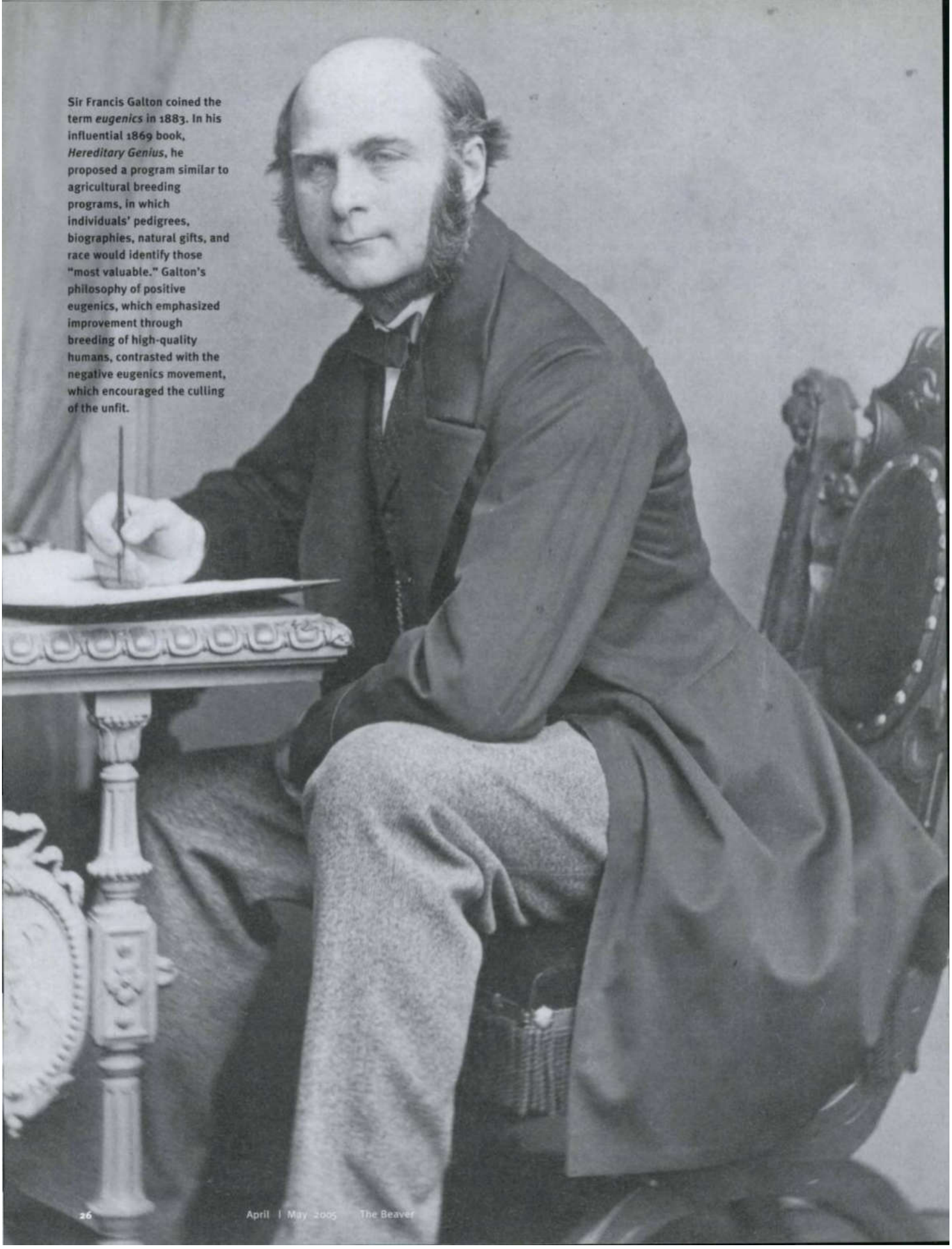
The Canadian General: Sir William Otter **by Desmond Morton. Hakkert, Toronto, 1974.**

The Plains Cree **by David G. Mandelbaum. Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1979.**



Sir Francis Galton coined the term *eugenics* in 1883. In his influential 1869 book, *Hereditary Genius*, he proposed a program similar to agricultural breeding programs, in which individuals' pedigrees, biographies, natural gifts, and race would identify those "most valuable." Galton's philosophy of positive eugenics, which emphasized improvement through breeding of high-quality humans, contrasted with the negative eugenics movement, which encouraged the culling of the unfit.

Perfect People, Perfect Country

Canada had no place for the feeble-minded – at least according to the gospel of eugenics.

by Allan Levine

Dr. Helen MacMurchy had a noble mission. She was determined to save Canada from the ills of the modern world. To accomplish this, however, meant confronting the problem of the "feeble-minded," as she and others called "mentally defective" individuals who threatened the health of the nation.

MacMurchy is remembered today as one of the country's pioneers of public health. Although she often sounded like such champions of the early twentieth-century eugenics movement as American Charles Davenport in her passionate conviction that feeble-mindedness – clearly linked, she argued, to crime, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency – and an open-door immigration policy posed a real threat to Canadian survival. Indeed, these fears were realized when W.G. Smith, a psychology professor at the University of Toronto, published his book *A Study in Canadian Immigration* in 1920. Among other "disturbing" facts, Smith's calculations showed that while at New York's Ellis Island, "the Americans' rate of rejection of mental defectives was one to every 1,590 immigrants ... Canada's was only one to every 10,127 as evidence of leniency of the latter country's screening process."

MacMurchy was influenced by the work of such U.S. eugenicists as Henry Goddard and, in particular, Richard Dugdale. Dugdale was the author of a celebrated heredity study published in 1877 that showed how the union of an upstate New York frontiersman he called Max Juke and his "degenerate" (or morally inferior) wife in the 1730s were responsible for seven generations of misfits and criminals. Like her mentors, MacMurchy accepted that "individual inadequacy," rather than environment factors, had caused a crisis and required a bold solution. "Poverty, of course, is not a simple, but a complex condition," she wrote in a 1912 report. "It probably means poor health, inefficiency, lack of energy, less than average intelligence or force in some way, not enough imagination to see the importance of details."

Born in Ontario in 1862, MacMurchy, seemingly prim and proper from a young age, was also unorthodox; she opted to become a doctor, which was not a usual career choice for a Canadian woman at the turn of the century. She graduated from Women's Medical College in Toronto in 1901 and then furthered her studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Returning to Canada, she was the first woman offered a position in the Toronto General Hospital's Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

She gradually became more active in public health and starting in 1906 submitted reports on the feeble-minded to the Ontario government. She was appointed the province's first inspector of the feeble-minded in 1914 and briefly worked for the Ontario education department supervising special-education

Dr. Helen MacMurchy (1862–1940) had an influential career in public health, championing mental and physical health of women, children, and the disadvantaged. As Ontario inspector of the feebleminded, she endorsed the eugenic philosophy of sterilization, despite the often subjective and inaccurate classification of defective individuals. In 1920 she was appointed chief of the Division of Maternal Child Welfare in the federal department of health, retiring in 1934.

Adapted from The Devil in Babylon: Fear of Progress and the Birth of Modern Life *by Allan Levine, published by McClelland & Stewart Ltd. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.*

classes. Recognized for her expertise in the area, the federal government recruited her for its newly established Department of Health in 1920. She ran its Division of Maternal and Child Welfare for the next fourteen years, taking a special interest in reducing infant mortality – a problem she typically blamed on "ignorant mothers."

The same year she became an Ottawa civil servant, she also published her bestselling book *The Almosts: A Study of the Feeble-Minded* (1920). Using research she had conducted during her work as Ontario's inspector of the feeble-minded, MacMurchy educated Canadians (as well as Americans, since the book was published in Boston) beyond the medical and political communities on the unfit and degenerate menace afflicting the country – yet always with a feeling of empathy.

Board of Directors, United Farm Workers of Alberta, 1921 (with Margaret Gunn, sixth from the left, on chair arm). Founded in 1914, the UFWA was an influential lobby group with interests in education, health care, and women's rights. It was also a strong proponent of sterilization for the "feeble-minded," and lobbied for the Sexual Sterilization Act that became law in 1928. The law would not be repealed until 1972 and more than 2,800 people were sterilized.

One had to treat the feeble-minded with care, she noted, yet never lose sight of the fact that they were abnormal and had to be treated as such. "It is the age of true democracy," she wrote, "that will not only give every one justice, but will redeem the waste products of humanity and give the mental defective all the chance he needs to develop his gifts and all the protection he needs to keep away from evils and temptations that he never will be grown-up enough to resist, and that society cannot afford to let him fall a victim to."

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Should society, in fact, have failed these hopeless and helpless people, then the consequences would be severe. The feeble-minded might have been a small percentage of the total population, but as she maintained in a 1916 report – "with dubious statistical precision," as Canadian eugenics historian Angus McLaren has put it – they accounted for the vast majority of alcoholics, juvenile delinquents, unmarried mothers, and prostitutes. Quoting from the work of an American physician, Dr. Walter Fernald, she expressed the sentiment shared by eugenicists across North America that "every mental defective is a potential criminal."

It was Charles Darwin's cousin Francis Galton who coined the term *eugenics* in 1883, following the publication of his book *Hereditary Genius* in 1869. It was derived from the Greek root meaning "good in birth" or "noble in heredity" to describe his utopian scheme. Eugenics was, he said, "a brief word to express the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognizance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had." So convinced was he of the flawlessness of his theory, he believed "its principles ought to become one of the dominant motives in a civilized nation, much as if they were one of its religious tenets."

The scientific and intellectual communities did not immediately embrace Galton's plan for a better and fitter world. Many later did. Their faith in the paramount significance of heredity was not really confirmed until the turn of the century. In 1900, scientists showed renewed interest in and acceptance of the work of an Austrian monk and botanist named Gregor Mendel, who had extensively studied the breeding of pea plants in the 1860s. From his experiments, Mendel had been able to draw reasonable conclusions about what he called "elements" – dominant and recessive genes – which were passed on from one generation to the next. "Mendel's law of segregation and independent assortment," as it became known, laid the foundation of modern genetics (a term first used in 1906). It only made sense to early eugenicists that human traits – not just physical, but also intellectual and moral characteristics – were transmitted in the same way.

That was the view, at any rate, of influential scientists and writers like Karl Pearson in England and especially Charles Davenport in the United States, who operated a huge eugenics institution at Cold Spring Harbor, outside of New York City. Davenport participated in international eugenic conferences in Germany (organized by the International Society for Racial Hygiene) and was involved in national conferences on "race betterment" on how to improve "American stock."

One such gathering took place in 1915 in San Francisco in conjunction with the Panama Pacific Exposition being held in the city at the time. Davenport's group mounted an effective eugenics exhibit at the Palace of Education, complete with graphs, photographs, and portraits displaying the impact of heredity on the American population. For the thousands of people visiting the exhibit, it was a lesson in "the rapid increase of race degeneracy."

During this period, and again in the early 1920s, middle-class Americans and Canadians could not hear or read enough about eugenics. Countless articles appeared in the *New York Times* and other newspapers espousing its virtues, and the best magazines – *Harper's Weekly, Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Evening Post,* and the *New Republic* – profiled the movement's proponents and analyzed their apparently scientifically sound findings.

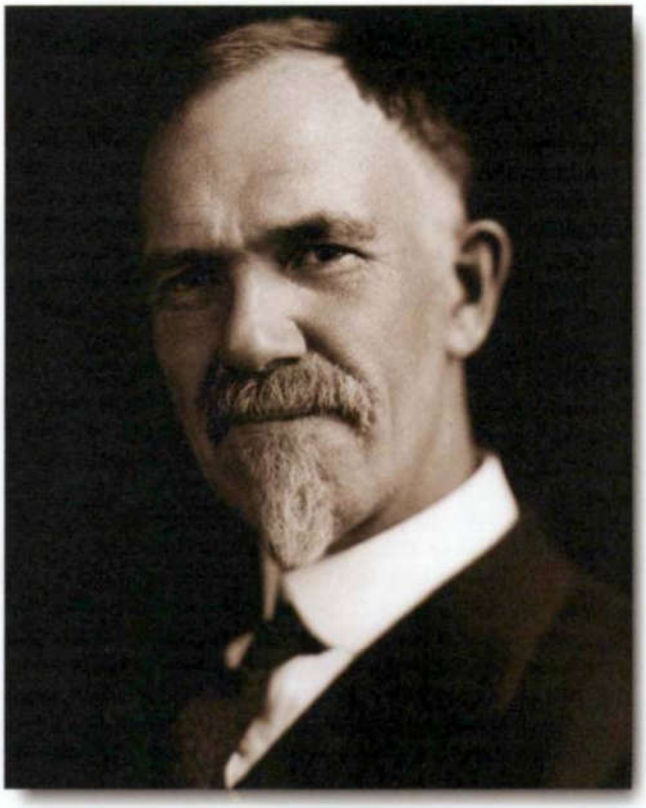
Writers such as J.F. Bobbitt, Granville Stanley Hall (a prolific American educator), and particularly journalist Albert E. Wiggam, author of the 1923 bestseller *The New Decalogue of Science,* spread the gospel of eugenics across North America.

At Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and other North American colleges and universities, eugenics found its way into the science curriculum. "We know enough about agriculture so that the agricultural production of the country could be doubled if the knowledge were applied," claimed Charles Van Hise, a geologist and president of the University of Wisconsin. "We know enough about disease so that if the knowledge were utilized, infectious and contagious diseases would be substantially destroyed in the United States within a score of years; we know enough about eugenics so that if the knowledge were applied, the defective classes would disappear within a generation."

The tremendous appeal of the eugenics movement was partly based on hope and partly on fear – hope for building a stronger and more intelligent populace, and fear that the trend was going in the opposite direction. Progressive-minded Americans and Canadians watched in trepidation as their respective countries were swamped by foreigners, who not only challenged the supremacy of the Nordic or Anglo-Saxon race, but also brought to their cities nothing but poverty, slums, crime, prostitution, and corruption. "National deterioration," was what pro-eugenic academics and propagandists called it in Britain.

Then the First World War began, and they saw their best and brightest march off to die in the battlefields of Belgium and France, while the unfit, weaklings, degenerates, and feeble-minded remained at home to reproduce more of their own kind. (It was not lost on eugenic supporters that improvements in modern medicine and the quality of life generally also permitted the weak and feeble-minded to survive and have children when in an earlier era they might have perished).

Most eugenicists dwelled incessantly on controlling the birth rate of the unfit, but for some, eliminating the feeble-minded altogether was the obvious next step. In London,



Charles Davenport (1866–1944), American director of the Eugenics Record Office, was an eminent biologist who gave eugenics much of its scientific credibility. But its scientific claims actually obscured a number of research flaws. The mental and behavioural traits eugenicists hoped to define, such as intelligence and criminality, were not only highly subjective, but far more complex in cause than mere genetics. A disregard for social and environmental factors, improper survey methods, and an inability to quantify such traits were other problems.

George Bernard Shaw, the Fabian socialist and dramatist, who preached positive eugenics, which emphasized the importance of "good breeding quality," also argued that "extermination must be put on a scientific basis if it is ever to be carried out humanely." Adding, "If we desire a certain type of civilization and culture, we must exterminate the sort of people who do not fit it."

Novelist D.H. Lawrence was more direct and eerily prophetic. In a letter to a friend in 1908 he explained his plan to save the world: "If I had my way, I would build a lethal chamber as big as the Crystal Palace, with a military band playing softly, and a Cinematograph working brightly; then I'd go out in the back streets and main streets and bring them in, all the sick, the halt, and the maimed; I would lead them gently, and they would smile me a weary thanks." Lawrence died in the south of France in 1930, not knowing that the Nazis would indeed implement such a devastating policy ten years later.

COLD SPRING HARBOR LABORATORY ARCHIVES

Most Canadian supporters of eugenics would not have gone that far. Education and a more efficient immigration inspection system were necessary. But Helen MacMurchy, among others, also campaigned for segregation and sterilization of the "feeble-minded" as the best method to protect the country's well-being. Birth control, in MacMurchy's opinion, was not a practical solution – she referred to it as "unnatural" and "contrary to one's higher instincts."

Still, Canadian politicians were more reticent than were the Americans to introduce sterilization legislation. Following the precedent set in Indiana in 1907 – the first of more than a dozen states to pass sterilization laws – Dr. John Godfrey attempted five years later to introduce a sterilization bill for asylum patients in the Ontario Legislature. Despite support from such esteemed medical experts as psychiatrist Charles Clarke of the Toronto General Hospital and a staunch proponent of eugenics, the provincial government took a more cautious approach. Unlike Americans, some Canadians, perhaps, were not as certain that an aggressive eugenics program would result in a glorious future. Sensing that the public was uncertain how to proceed, Ontario politicians let the matter drop for the moment.

Throughout the twenties, women's groups in particular continued to push for legalized sterilization. In British Columbia and Alberta, Nellie McClung, Judge Emily Murphy, and Henrietta Edwards, among others, believed sterilization was a panacea for society's ills. In her memoirs published in 1945, McClung recalled visiting one prairie family who had sterilized their feeble-minded daughter, named Katie. The effect was apparently soothing, almost magical.

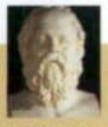
"Katie was well and neatly dressed," wrote McClung. "Her mother told me that she was taking full charge of the chickens now, and in the evenings was doing Norwegian knitting which had a ready sale in the neighbourhood. The home was happy again." Always more pragmatic than McClung, Emily Murphy, an Alberta police magistrate (considered the first female judge in Canada as well as the British Empire), was also more direct. "We protect the public against diseased and distempered cattle," she declared. "We should similarly protect them against the offal of humanity."

Sterilization bills were introduced into the B.C. and Alberta legislatures. In B.C., the government decided to appoint a Royal Commission on Mental Hygiene in 1925. It took more than two years to study the issue, although the commissioners – who were influenced by developments in the United States – recommended the sterilization of individuals in mental institutions. The editors of the *Vancouver Sun* added their support in an editorial. Sterilization, they wrote, was "the only reasonable way of protecting the strains from which the world must draw its leaders." By the time the commissioners submitted their final report in 1928, however, there had been a change in government in B.C. and the matter was not resolved for another five years.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Better Baby" contest at Cathedral Parish, St. Paul, Minnesota. Better Baby and Fitter Family contests became popular at country fairs and exhibits throughout Canada and the U.S. Often sponsored by eugenics organizations, the contests promoted desirable physical traits and standards of intelligence, and encouraged the "best and brightest" to procreate.

Events were more decisive in Alberta. Support for a sterilization law had been voiced in the provincial legislature since the early 1920s. Lectures, presentations, and articles had convinced many Albertans of the pressing need to deal decisively with this issue. Asked Margaret Gunn, the president of the United Farm Women of Alberta in 1924: "Shall we continue our present system of merely taking charge of the very lowest physical and mental types, those who cause a menace to the state, the feeble-minded who in large measure

360BC 

In *The Republic*, Socrates explains: "There is a need for the best men to have intercourse as often as possible with the best women ... if the flock is going to be of the most eminent quality."

1869

Inspired by discoveries in biology and genetics, Francis Galton publishes his book *Hereditary Genius*, and fourteen years later coins the term *eugenics*.

1920

Canadian Helen MacMurchy publishes her book *The Almosts: A Study of the Feeble-Minded*, spreading her eugenics message to the general public.

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fill our jails and penitentiaries and make up the great substratum of humanity – social derelicts, doomed because of congenital inferiority to lead lives that are crass and unlovely, and to lower the vitality of our civilization?" She advised the government to adopt a policy of "racial betterment through the weeding out of undesirable strains," adding that "democracy was never intended for degenerates."

George Hoadley, the health minister in John Brownlee's United Farmers of Alberta government, concurred with such sentiments. Arguing that the continuing increase in the province's feeble-minded population – a majority of whom he pointed out were foreigners – was an undue burden on taxpayers, he introduced a sexual sterilization bill in February 1928.

Still, not everyone approved. Soon Alberta newspapers were filled with letters to the editor from concerned citizens who questioned what they regarded as the government's heavy-handed actions. "Are we animals and soon to be classed as Tomworths, Holsteins or Clydes?" asked one writer in the Edmonton *Journal*. "Possibly Mr. Hoadley in his desire for physical perfection will bring in a bill next year that all children, such as those suffering from infantile paralysis or any deformity, be taken to the high level bridge and thrown into the Saskatchewan." A group of prominent Edmonton residents organized the People's Protective League to fight the proposed legislation, which it declared was "interfering with the rights of people."

It was to no avail. The government passed Canada's first sterilization act in early March along with provision for the establishment of a "eugenics board" (consisting of two medical practitioners and two lay people) whose job it was to evaluate each case on its own merits. According to the act, parents or guardians were to be consulted before any medical procedure was to occur, a stipulation that was eliminated by the Social Credit government of William Aberhart in 1937. Alberta's sterilization act remained untouched until it was finally repealed in 1972. By then, 2,822 Albertans had been sterilized for reasons varying from possessing a "low IQ to apparent promiscuity." (As Alberta historian Alvin Finkel also notes, in later years "some boys with Down's syndrome had one testicle removed for the benefit of a researcher into the causes of Down's.")

British Columbia instituted a similar bill in 1933, yet other provinces, including Ontario, where there always had been substantial support for such a law, felt that it was too drastic a measure. The Eugenics Society of Canada, organized by a group of committed academics and doctors in late 1930 to promote "race betterment" and sterilization, never stopped hoping that the situation would change.

During the thirties, Canadian and American physicians and scientists watched almost with envy as Hitler and the Nazis imposed their own eugenics program. In their view, it was something to behold. According to a January 1936 article in the magazine *Canadian Doctor*, the Nazis' policy had ensured that 200,000 unfit German citizens would not have children. The financial saving to Hitler's government was supposedly enormous. That same year, Charles Davenport's protégé Harry Laughlin was awarded an honorary doctorate of medicine by the University of Heidelberg for his eugenics work at Cold Spring Harbor. He was unable to attend the ceremony but wrote to thank the university's officials. It was, he noted, "evidence of a common understanding of German and American scientists of the nature of eugenics."

Historians estimate that by the end of the Second World War, the Nazis, who had transformed their forced sterilization program of more than 400,000 individuals into a massive killing machine, had likely murdered 140,000 physically handicapped and mentally ill people. At one mental institution in Nazi Germany, the staff toasted with beer the cremation of the ten-thousandth patient – a child gassed to death. In 1946, at the trial of Nazi doctors held at Nuremberg, one physician after the other stated that they had modelled their system after the one in the United States.

Allan Levine is a Winnipeg historian and writer. He is the author of several popular histories, including *Scattered Among the Peoples: The Jewish Diaspora in Ten Portraits* (2002), and three historical mysteries set in early twentieth-century Winnipeg featuring the detective Sam Klein.

Et Cetera

***Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada*, 1885–1945, by Angus McLaren. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1990.**

***Extreme Measures: The Dark Visions and Bright Ideas of Francis Galton*, by Martin Brookes. Bloomsbury, London, 2004.**

***The Sterilization of Leilani Muir*, 1996. The National Film Board of Canada. Directed by Glynis Whiting.**

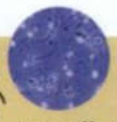
1928

Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act is legislated, allowing the involuntary sterilization of mentally ill or handicapped inmates of institutions. Such legislation would follow in British Columbia five years later.

1945

The western world is shocked to learn of the horrific lengths to which Nazi Germany had taken the idea of improving human stock.

1980



In an effort to counteract what he sees as the diluting of America's gene pool by "retrograde humans," millionaire inventor Robert Graham establishes a sperm bank to which only Nobel Prize winners and other men of exceptional ability can donate. The sperm bank would close in 1999.

A Murder in Hastings County

When a Catholic couple was charged with killing a Protestant neighbour in Canada West, it became a lightning rod for partisan passions.

by Desmond Morton

The Aylward case is forgotten now. The sight of a young married couple hanged together for a murder must have stuck in the memory of the thousands who jammed into Belleville, Canada West, on that bitterly cold Monday morning, December 8, 1862. But those people are all dead now. So is a society that could hang Mary Aylward, a young woman mad enough to convict herself with her own tongue, abandoning her three small children, one of them still a babe in arms. As for Richard Aylward, her husband, what precisely was the crime that brought him to the gallows and turned his children into orphans?

At the time, few were convinced that the death sentence pronounced at their trial would actually be carried out. Petitions from neighbours and fellow Catholics claimed perjury and falsified evidence. The jury had strongly urged mercy. Even the convicted couple refused to accept their imminent death. On the weekend before the scheduled execution, rumours circulated in Belleville that the gathering throngs would be denied the spectacle they were travelling for miles to see. In their separate cells in the Hastings County jail, the Aylwards took heart.

True, their judge, William Henry Draper, was the perfect symbol of a High Tory, Family Compact politician in Upper Canada. In the trial on October 20, Draper had been implacably on the side of the Crown. Before he pronounced sentence, Mr. Chief Justice Draper solemnly warned the couple to expect no reprieve. They must devote themselves single-mindedly to seeking God's mercy, for they would find none on this earth.

Far away, in Quebec City, was a new government, elected in the very month that the Aylward family had been caught in their own tragedy. Fed up with George-Étienne Cartier and his partner, John A. Macdonald, and by indifference to their demand for a voice equivalent to their burgeoning population, voters in Canada West had taken a chance on a moderate Reformer from Cornwall, John Sandfield Macdonald. A Catholic at the head of a largely Protestant bloc in the Legislative Assembly, Macdonald held the post of attorney general. The Aylwards presented the kind of dilemma all politicians fear. The legal and factual details of the case hardly mattered. In a Canada more cruelly divided by religion than by language or culture, backers of the former government would exploit whatever Sandfield Macdonald did for whichever denomination felt aggrieved. And Belleville's Catholic parish priest had left no doubt that the Aylwards' conviction for murder was a cruel injustice.

What had the Aylward's done to risk the supreme penalty of the law? Mary O'Brien had been born in 1834 in Toor, a little village in the southeast corner of County Limerick in Ireland.

JEAN-MARIE BEAUDET

At the age of twelve, her parents sent her and her brother to join her older sister Ellen in Lakefield, Connecticut. Nine years later, she met Richard Aylward, who had emigrated from Carlow in Ireland in 1850 at the age of fourteen. Richard and Mary married at Poughkeepsie, New York, on August 15, 1855. The young couple had decided to move in with Richard's aunt, Mary Ann McRae, at Puslinch, near Guelph, in Canada West. In 1856, they moved 275 kilometres east to Kaladar in Addington County. Five years later, they again moved, to property seventy kilometres north, near the village of Bancroft, in Hastings County, on the edge of the Canadian Shield, where free grants of hundred acres were offered to anyone willing to build a house of at least twenty-by-twenty-three feet and keep at least twelve acres in cultivation for five years. Richard's aunt had settled nearby. By July 1861, the Aylwards were established on Peterson Road with two daughters, a third about to be born, and very little else to show for their time in Canada. Richard

HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (HC 2183)

When the constable taking the Aylwards to jail in Belleville stopped for refreshment in Madoc (shown here in the 1860s), two of the prime pieces of evidence, the scythe and the shotgun, were taken by an unknown person.

Aylward set to work clearing a field and earning a few dollars by working for better-off settlers in the neighbourhood. Mary was left to manage alone. By her own account, two days after her baby was born, three men attacked her and her husband, knocking her unconscious with a handspike but failing to kick Richard Aylward to death.

The Aylwards' neighbours on the other side of the road had been there since May 1861. William Munro and his wife, Chrystina Margaret, were Protestants, a lot older than the Aylwards, and relations never seem to have been very cordial. Having sold Munro some hens, the Aylwards were dismayed that the birds were free to cross the road and forage in their brand new wheat field. This became an explicit source of bad relations. Later, Mary Aylward claimed that when she tried to drive the hens from her farm, Munro threw stones at her and shouted abuse. When Munro was busy, his son Alexander (Alick) echoed his father's behaviour. For several days Aylward was summoned home to protect his anxious wife.

On May 16, 1862, Aylward came in from his day's work, sat down to await dinner, and was playing with the baby when he and his wife heard visitors in their yard. Munro, too, had come home, and his wife reported she had heard a shot from across the road. She also claimed one of their hens was missing. Munro and Alick decided to visit the Aylwards' property. When they crossed the road, Mary Aylward appeared with her babe in arms while the two other girls played in the yard. Mrs. Aylward recalled telling Munro to get off her property, to which the older man had replied: "I will not until I get ready, come out and put me from the door if you dare, you d--d w-h-e." Next, Mary's husband appeared. Richard told Munro to get off his property. Munro refused to leave without his hen. Aylward replied that he had not shot the bird, but wished he had. Next the Munros headed west toward Aylward's wheat field to hunt for their hen. Richard picked up his shotgun and followed them.

According to the younger Munro, at the wheat field, Richard turned and levelled his shotgun at the older Munro, who promptly grabbed the muzzle. Richard then pulled a two-barrelled pistol from his shirt. William Munro knocked the weapon out of Richard's hand and told his son to pick it up. Alexander turned his back on the two older men and found the pistol nine or ten metres away. When he rose with the weapon in his hand, Aylward turned his gun toward the boy, who dropped to his knees. Richard fired. The buckshot hit Alexander in the back over his left shoulder. The boy rose and ran for home, streaming blood but carrying the pistol. Later, he claimed, twenty-nine pieces of lead were extracted from his back. Aylward and Munro were left wrestling for control of the shotgun when Mary Aylward appeared, carrying a scythe. She slashed at Munro, as hard as she could, striking his head and then his arm. It was William Munro's turn to stagger home, collapsing inside his doorway in a pool of his own blood.

A week before, Richard's cousin, Isabella McRae, recalled seeing Richard and Mary using the McRaes' grindstone to sharpen the Aylward's scythe. She recalled that Richard had claimed to be getting ready for haying. Since snow was still on the ground, this had struck her mother, Mrs. McRae, as odd. On the evening of May 16, she remembered, Richard and his wife had returned. This time Mary Aylward loaded the shotgun from the McRaes' supplies while her husband carried the scythe. "She said she had cut the head off the old man," Mrs. McRae later recalled in court, "and that Richard had shot Alick." When Mrs. McRae expressed some skepticism, Mary Aylward showed her the blood on the blade. At that point, McRae's son told the Aylwards to leave, and they did. Mrs. McRae hurried to the Munros' cabin and found William still lying on his floor in a pool of blood and unable to speak. Three days later, Mrs. McRae visited again. This time she found him in bed and able to talk, but so weak that, two days later, Munro confessed that he did not think he would live. He was right. William Munro died on May 28, 1862.

In frontier settlements, distances mattered. A neighbour named Finlayson set off for Madoc, 110 kilometres away, to summon Dr. Augustus Yeomans, the nearest coroner. On the way, he notified the reeve of Tudor Township, a Mr. Jelly, who summoned his neighbours and set off to arrest the murderers. At dawn on Saturday, May 31, Dr. Yeomans set out on horseback. He reached Munro's cabin at ten o'clock Monday morning. Examining the corpse, he found a large wound that had penetrated the left side of the skull down to the membrane, and another wound above the elbow of the left arm that had penetrated through half the bone. "The injury of the head must, I think, certainly have occasioned death," Yeomans concluded. Both blows had required great force. Still, Munro had lived for twelve days after his injury. He had initially refused medical attention, but another neighbour, John Rous, had persuaded him to let an Indian doctor tend to the wound. There were no details of any resulting treatment, but the native healer seems to have removed the dressings, exposing the wounds and, local opinion agreed, hastening death.

On Saturday, Mr. Jelly's posse arrested Mary Aylward. On the following Monday, after William Munro's funeral, William Edes, the Hastings County constable, arrested both Aylwards. He asked for and secured the pistol, shotgun, and scythe, and carried them with him as he escorted his prisoners 100 kilometres south to the jail in Belleville. Stopping for refreshment at a tavern on the way, some person "I don't know who" took the scythe and shotgun. Despite offering a reward, Edes confessed, "I have not been able to recover it." The Aylwards were brought before a magistrate and lodged in separate cells to await the Hastings County autumn assizes, the Hon. W.H. Draper, chief justice for Common Pleas of Upper Canada, presiding.

Crimes, especially murder, fascinated Victorians, and they were a staple for pioneer newspapers. Reporters exploited their drama, mystery, and moral messages. Publishers recognized that they were cheap to cover. A journalist simply had to sit in the court and take notes. The first-ever trial of husband-and-wife murder suspects was an easy draw.

Mr. Chief Justice Draper was not quite the jurist that a judge-shopping attorney might have chosen for his clients. Draper had been the leading figure in Upper Canadian Toryism, an upholder of the Family Compact, and a politician who had tried in vain to defend the power of Canada's most austere British governor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, against the proponents of Responsible Government. Defeated but unrepentant, Draper had retired to the judicial bench.

The Aylwards were also hapless enough to follow a trial that had deeply offended Draper's stern sensibilities. After an affray over liquor near Belleville, Lorenzo Taylor, nineteen, had been left stabbed to death. Witnesses identified the killer as another young man named Maurice Moorman. After deliberating for half an hour, the Belleville jury returned a not-guilty verdict. Moorman's supporters "raised a cheer" in the courtroom, and a disgusted Draper scribbled in his desk book: "A strange verdict. I expected at least a verdict of manslaughter." So did the Belleville *Chronicle*: "If every man is to be permitted to take the life of his neighbour with impunity in defence of a bottle of whiskey, we might as well reside in California as in Canada. We trust that another verdict like this will never be recorded in Belleville." Even before their trial began, word in the streets of Belleville was that the Aylwards were "doomed."

"If every man is to be permitted to take the life of his neighbour with impunity in defence of a bottle of whiskey, we might as well reside in California as in Canada."

Draper's next trial, of course, featured Richard and Mary Aylward. By the time of the trial on October 20, several witnesses had been assembled for the Crown, represented by the solicitor general of Canada West, the Hon. Adam Wilson. The Aylward defence team, financed by Belleville's Roman Catholics, included James O'Reilly, a Kingston lawyer, and John Finn, a local man. The defence began by challenging fifteen of the jurors assembled by the sheriff, and ensuring that some of the twelve remaining members were Catholics. After the Crown had laid out its narrative of events, Wilson summoned Alexander Munro, the sole independent eyewitness of the events in the Aylwards' field. Calm and restrained, the young man made a good impression. He testified about the altercation, but he had not seen the blows to his father's head and arm. He also confessed that he had never been on good terms with Aylwards, that he had said nothing during the afternoon, and had taken home the Aylwards' pistol. Mary Ann McRae was the Crown's star witness. Her claim to have seen the Aylwards sharpening their scythe was evidence of the premeditation the Crown needed to prove murder rather than manslaughter.

Mrs. McRae was not shaken by O'Reilly, and she denied that she had ever said "I would wait in town and see these people hanged, or anything like it." Her daughter, Isabella, then testified that Mary Aylward had told her of a plan to tempt the deceased over their fence and into their house. Once Munro was at her door, she planned to shoot him and fetch male witnesses, including her husband, to see that Munro had pursued her into her own dooryard. "She would talk in this boasting style of what she would do," claimed Isabella.

COLLECTION OF CONFEDERATION CENTRE ART GALLERY, CHARLOTTETOWN / GIFT OF LORNA BATER AND DOREEN PARKER / CAG 98.5.1

***Hastings County Courthouse and Gaol, Belleville*, circa 1870, watercolour and graphite on paper, by George Ackerman (1803–1891).**

Several witnesses testified to Mary Aylward's desire to share the details of her crime. William Johnston, a neighbour on the same side of the road as the Aylwards, remembered seeing the couple coming along the road, Mary with the gun and Richard trailing the scythe. "William Munro's dead," Mrs. Aylward had declared, adding, "I did not mean to hit him on the head. I meant to hit him on the neck and cut his head off." Johnston had followed the accused to the McRaes', where Mary had learned that Munro was still alive. "God Almighty increase his pain" was her response. Richard, as usual, said nothing. Mary Aylward persuaded Margaret Glen to visit the scene of the fight. The sight of Munro's damaged hat on the field was evidence enough for her: "I said it would give her a great deal of trouble. She said it would give her no trouble, that if it was to do she would do it again" – a claim Mary repeated to another witness, Theophilus Golder, who lived farther down the Peterson Road.

Why was there such hatred? George Selby, a more distant neighbour, had called on the Aylwards after Munro's funeral. "Prisoner Mary told me [the] deceased was in the habit of coming opposite the house abusing her, and calling her improper names," Draper's notes recorded, "and that she had given it to him for now, and she wished she had given him another blow, and finished him off at once." At the time, Mrs. Aylward was under arrest, and someone might well have advised her that she was incriminating herself. In the absence of a murder weapon or an uninvolved eyewitness, Mary's own mouth provided the Crown's chief evidence. Later, in a letter to her youngest children, she would deny the evidence and insist that Mrs. McRae had perjured herself, but the variety and solemnity of the witnesses obviously convinced the jury and particularly Judge Draper. Mary's conduct may have reflected her belief that any wife protecting her husband's life on their own property would be immune from condemnation. That was not James O'Reilly's theory. Instead, his interpretation was that Mary's ravings were an insane reaction to her horror at being driven to homicide to protect her endangered husband. Nonsense, responded the Crown. By sharpening the scythe and following her husband to the wheat field, Mary Aylward had carried out her part in a murderous conspiracy.

In less than a single day, the testimony was complete. Except for John Rous, who had advised Munro to have the Aylwards arrested and reported the unexpected reply from Munro that he "had no business interfering with them," the defence rested its case. O'Reilly had promised more witnesses than he produced, perhaps because Aylward sympathizers were too poor to make the long journey south to Belleville in early winter weather. After O'Reilly addressed the jury, so did Adam Wilson for the Crown. Then the chief justice summed up the case in terms that left little room for another Moorman verdict. Draper had obviously been horrified by testimony that Mary Aylward had wished added pain and an early death for "Old Baldy," as she had called Munro. If the jury believed that her self-incrimination was due to insanity, he warned, every hardened criminal would make the same claim. If the jury had doubts, they must give the benefit to the accused; Draper obviously had none. After deliberating for two hours, the jury returned. Its foreman, Richard Bird, announced the verdict:

"guilty with a strong recommendation for mercy." Having jotted in his casebook that the jury had offered no reasons for its recommendation, Draper promised to pass on their views to the Executive and turned to the accused:

> I must tell you that the law allows me no discretion in the matter. I will lay the case before the proper authorities but I deem it my duty to warn you not to spend the short time which outraged humanity yet allows you in the world in vain hopes and useless endeavours for mercy.

The Aylwards would be "taken to the place of execution and be there hanged by the neck until you are dead." The Aylwards did not soften the judge's heart. "You may hang away," shouted Richard. "I am not guilty." His wife echoed him, "Yes, they may hang away, we are innocent," adding a little mysteriously, "Doyle and Rowdy committed the murder and laid it on us." Far from looking downcast or penitent, the *Chronicle*'s reporter observed "the prisoners spoke to one another and laughed in an unfeeling manner. Having seen each other only during the short trial, the couple was again separated and despatched to their cells to await their fate.

In fact, "vain hopes and useless endeavours for mercy" would preoccupy them and their growing number of friends and allies. Father Michael Brennan of Belleville's St. Michael's Church, also an Irish immigrant, and his nephew and curate, Father John Brennan, had befriended the Aylwards as soon as they were imprisoned, helped find them counsel, and encouraged parishioners to petition on their behalf. The Brennans insisted to the congregation and to anyone else who would listen that Mary's conviction should be reduced to manslaughter and that Richard be unconditionally released. John Finn, their lawyer, took a petition north to Madoc and to the settlers of Hastings Road. James Kennedy tried to compensate for the humble circumstances of the Aylwards by claiming that his forty signatures were from "gentlemen of the greatest intelligence and highest standing in this county." He noted the influence of the Moorman case, and also insisted that the killing had occurred far from law and magistrates, "where every one thinks it is proper to defend his supposed rights by the strong hand."

Signing such a petition was hard to resist. It cost nothing and retained a neighbour's good will. To refuse, as a Toronto *Globe* article noted, imperilled friendship and threatened the immense guilt that would follow if a condemned person were suddenly proved innocent. However, petitions also undermined a justice system that was assumed to be among the glories of English civilization – except, of course, among Irish Catholics who had felt the heavy hand of Anglo-Protestants since 1688 when Catholic James II was deposed as king of England. Mary Aylward had made statements in moments of passion and excitement "not knowing what she was doing or saying" argued a petitioner. Another insisted that Munro and his son had "irritated them in a most provoking manner" by coming unbidden on the Aylwards' land and remaining there.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / [illegible]

William Henry Draper (1801–1877) was a prominent Tory in Upper Canada who, leading the government from 1844 to 1847, became the first colonial politician to be styled "premier." Advancing in the judiciary after his retirement from politics, he became in 1856 chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Upper Canada, the position he held when Richard and Mary Aylward were brought before him.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA 12895

In 1862, John Sandfield Macdonald (1812–1872) was leader and attorney general in the fragile Reform government of an increasingly fractious united Province of Canada. A Roman Catholic in a largely Protestant bloc, he was placed in an unenviable position by the publicity surrounding the Aylward trail: His coreligionists demanded his sympathy, but his politics demanded circumspection.

ST. MICHAEL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ARCHIVES

The Reverend Michael Brennan (1796–1869), first pastor of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Belleville, was one of the leaders of sympathizers who sought to have the death penalty for Richard and Mary Aylward rescinded.

ST. MICHAEL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH ARCHIVES

The Reverend John Brennan, St. Michael's first curate and nephew to Michael Brennan, accompanied the Aylwards to the scaffold.

Another argument was that Munro's death was due to "an Indian 'quack doctor', at a time when the patient was progressing favourably." Above all, the prisoners were parents of three small children, one of whom, an infant in arms, shared her mother's jail cell. John Finn even forwarded a petition from Alexander Munro and his mother Chrystina, "her mark (X)," asking that the Aylwards' sentence be commuted to a life sentence.

The religious dimensions of the Aylward case caused John Sandfield Macdonald's government obvious embarrassment. As a Catholic, Macdonald's sympathy was demanded by his coreligionists; as the head of a fragile, Protestant-dominated coalition, it could not be given. As a man of principle, could the attorney general for Canada West let politics control his judgment? Chief Justice Draper certainly saw no reason to soften the sentence:

> Taking this woman's whole conduct through the whole case, we find nothing but the most cold-blooded barbarity, and not an act committed in the heat of passion. The sharpening of the scythe, the showing Johnston how she intended to cut his head off – her conduct at Mrs. McCrea's [sic] showing the scythe yet reeking in blood, when she is ordered out of the house.

The Aylwards had ignored Draper's advice. Confident of commutation, they showed no signs of humble repentance. On the Saturday before the execution, Mary Aylward issued a statement denouncing "the calumnious fabrication" that she and her husband were actually brother and sister. A final petition from John Finn appealed for a month's delay for the prisoners "owing to the fact that they are not spiritually prepared" arrived in Quebec almost too late to be considered. Father Michael Brennan passed on a claim that Mary Aylward was pregnant. From Quebec, the government directed that Mary Aylward be examined by the prison doctor and one or two of the prison's matrons. On December 2, Dr. Hope and Ann Dafoe, the jailer's wife, reported that "by examination" and "her own statement" the prisoner was not bearing a child. The law was left to take its course on December 8.

The Aylward's execution was covered in detail by the Hastings *Chronicle* and the Belleville *Intelligencer*. The reports were reprinted in papers across the Canadas. By dawn, close to a thousand people, "a moving tide of humanity," covered the courthouse square in front of the gallows. Ultimately more than five thousand stood in the bitter cold: "There were old men with whitened locks and bent forms, and infants nursing at their mothers' breasts, young men and maidens, boys and girls of all sizes and ages." There were cases of frostbite in the crowd, and the *Chronicle* deplored the fights, wrestling matches, and public drunkenness among young men in the throng. When the promised deadline of ten o'clock passed, there were "cries of 'Get them out here', 'Hang them' and the like filling the air." Someone had forgotten to sew up the linen caps that would cover the victims' heads.

At 11:25 A.M. the procession finally appeared, led by a couple of deputy sheriffs and bailiffs and a hooded hangman, followed by Mary Aylward "with deathly pallor on her countenance" and a trembling Richard Aylward. "Mary was dressed all in white, with a crepe shawl covering her shoulders," and both prisoners wore a noose, ready to be hooked to the gallows. Since Victorians often believed that criminality was evident in a villain's appearance, the Aylwards were a disappointment. Richard, at twenty-six years of age, was "rather well-proportioned," with prominent cheekbones and a low forehead, but Mary, at twenty-eight, did not look her part at all. "Her appearance is prepossessing," claimed the *Intelligencer*, "and few would believe, judging from her countenance, that she could commit the fearful crime." The reporter continued: "About medium height, dark hair, fair complexion, a bright eye, features well proportioned, and an intelligent look, the impression of her character upon the casual observer, is a favorable one."

On the scaffold, the Aylwards fell to their knees to pray with Father John Brennan. When he lifted them to their feet, the hangman, "a short, thick-set men, dressed head to toe in a face-covering white gown," hooked on their nooses and covered their heads with the newly made hoods. The priest looked to Richard, but not Mary, for any final words. "The young man was too distraught in emotion, too broken in spirit to speak," claimed a reporter, so Father Brennan begged the crowd to seek God's mercy on the Aylwards' souls. The crowd, noted the *Chronicle*'s reporter, neither heard nor cared. "They were there to see the Aylwards hang." They got their wish.

As the priest stepped back, he collapsed in a faint and was carried unconscious from the scaffold. The hangman jerked back the bolt that held the two trap doors under the Aylwards, and the two bodies fell into the void. Spectators strained to see the results: "Mary's frail body contorted like a grotesque puppet on tangled strings for a minute and a half until life deserted her. Richard continued to struggle for a further minute ... before he too found final peace." The bodies were left hanging for a further twenty-five minutes "for the satisfaction and pleasure of those who came to witness their death." Later, at 3 P.M., a horse-drawn wagon took two simple caskets a few hundred metres down Church Street to St. Michael's for the funeral.

The Catholic church was filled to capacity. Barely recovered from his collapse, Father Brennan mounted to the pulpit to proclaim the Aylwards' innocence. The jury, he complained, had committed the folly of seeking mercy where there was no mercy to be found, a state of affairs that the Irish could recall from the days of Oliver Cromwell. Frequently he broke down in tears, and his sobs brought echoing sobbing from his congregation. A sympathetic family soon adopted the Aylwards' two older daughters; another family took the baby girl. The younger Father Brennan took his convictions to Montreal, to the Irish communities of Canada East, where he interpreted the Aylward case as Protestant malevolence against Catholics worthy of Cromwell, hyperbole for which George Brown's *Globe* later delivered a stern scolding:

The Government's refusal to revise the judgement pronounced by the court and forthwith a "feeling" was put up against them. Party machinery was set to work, party orators denounced the law officers as murderers; party newspapers labored to present evidence clearly proving guilt into positive proof of innocence; all contrived to make it appear that the wretched beings who ended their lives upon the scaffold were martyrs to political hate. Simply for his refusal to assist in obtaining a commutation of sentence, the present speaker of the Assembly, Mr. Wallbridge, was denounced in partisan papers as the vilest of living things.

Lewis Wallbridge, the Assembly member for Hastings South, a moderate reformer, had been elected as Speaker of the House in the summer of 1862, while Cartier and other Lower Canadian *bleus* denounced his refusal to sign an Aylward petition as proof of his anti-Catholicism. Though a convert to John A. Macdonald and Confederation in 1867, his memory of the vilification helped persuade him not to run. In 1878, when Wallbridge sought election again, his *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* contributor claims, Catholics were still waiting for him and he was again defeated.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / C-120199

Roman Catholic Church in Belleville, Ontario, circa 1855.

Until 1893, the accused could not be called as a witness. Mary Aylward's version of events became known only after her death, when two letters to her children, dictated to Mrs. Grant on the Saturday before her execution, appeared in both the *Chronicle* and the *Intelligencer*. To Ellen, her eight-year-old daughter, Mary Aylward left the care of her two younger sisters and a bitter account of repeated provocation and brutality by the Munros, father and son, culminating on May 16. She had, she insisted, come to her husband's aid after she heard the older, stronger Munro "swearing by his Jesus that he would shoot him with his own gun in place of him shooting the hens."

Then she saw Alick pointing the pistol at her husband. "I saw the old scythe lying on the ground a few rods ahead of me. I took it up and ran up towards him; your Pa was down and I ran up and hit Munro one stroke." She did not know which man she had struck nor, until she saw Alick's "back on fire," had she any idea who had fired the shot.

Mary's other letter, to her "dear little Infant Daughters," begged them to remember her and her love for them, and left them with one wish, "as coming from the deathly lips of your mother, namely that you will attend to your religious duties. ... O what a cruel fate to be taken away from my infant children so young. God forgive those who are the cause of it." Forgiveness was mixed with a lively memory of those who had done her wrong, from Isabella McRae, who had lied about her, to three men, John and Martin Reddy and Michael Doyle, who had attacked her two days after her confinement with her baby, and had tried to kick her husband to death. Presumably these were "Rowdy and Doyle," whose names she had uttered after her sentence had been pronounced. Mary Aylward concluded the letter with forgiveness for more of Munro's villainy: "I suspect that Munro did throw a dead dog in my own well or where I was taking water, and asked how I liked the soup of it." Both letters were cosigned by her husband with "I concur in the foregoing statement." J.P. McDonnell, Mrs. Grant, her jailer, Zenas Dafoe, and his wife witnessed the signatures.

Mary Aylward had persuaded Father Brennan of her innocence of murder; she had not convinced her defence counsel. Instead, her repeated self-incrimination had burned the memory of both judge and jury. In his summation, Draper had dismissed as absurd the proposition that Mrs. Aylward had conveniently found a scythe lying in the wheat field. Yet not even Alick Munro remembered seeing her with it or wielding it. On the other hand, Dr. Yeomans had found two deep and distinct cuts on Munro's head and his arm. Too many witnesses had testified to Mary Aylward's bloodthirsty boasting to easily undermine the verdict or even to see her as a wronged and frightened woman.

A later generation may be appalled at Mary Aylward's fate and still wonder why her husband, who had killed no one, should be hanged beside her. A seemingly hapless cipher, Richard paid in full for the Victorian assumption that a husband was responsible for his wife's behaviour. "The past is a foreign country," claimed British novelist L.P. Hartley. "They do things differently there." Canada West in 1862 was a country in which we would prefer not to live.

Desmond Morton is Hiram Mills Professor of History at McGill University and author most recently of *Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War* (UBC Press, 2004).

Et Cetera

First Couple Hanged in Canada: The Tragedy of Mary and Richard Aylward **by Paul Kirby. Littlebrickbookhouse, Belleville, 2004.**

Uncertain Justice: Canadian Women and Capital Punishment, 1754–1953. **by F. Murray Greenwood and Beverley Boissery. Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2000.**

Shopping for Victory

On the home front in World War II, Canadians lived a contradiction. They were told to save. And asked to spend.

by Graham Broad

In May 1942 the National War Finance Committee placed an advertisement in *Maclean's* depicting the disembodied visage of Adolf Hitler whispering into the ear of a woman about to open her purse. "Go on," he says. "Spend it. What's the difference?" It was a message the government had been trying to convey since putting the price ceiling into effect in December: when you go shopping, you go shopping with Hitler.

On the same page, two more advertisements appeared. One was for Koneray brand pleated skirts, imported from Warwickshire, England, and the other for built-to-order summer cottages and cabins, "your own vacation headquarters" available in "easy monthly payments." Modern readers may find the contradiction – ads for frivolous consumption side by side with anticonsumerist propaganda – to be very odd, but readers in the spring of 1942 probably did not, having by then learned to take such contradictions in stride. As one druggist observed later that year, "Inventories are shrinking. Shelves are showing bare spots. Many lines of merchandise are in short supply, and sales are booming."

What a strange war it was. While Britons at home felt the shock of war from its earliest days and Americans would after Pearl Harbor, Canada's "phony war" lasted more than two years – two years when Canadians seemed neither at peace nor fully at war. No one who remembered the Great War could fail to notice the difference. In April 1915, just nine months after the Great War had begun, the men of the First Canadian Division held the line at Ypres while the Germans mauled them terribly: the division suffered six thousand casualties in three days. But in May 1942 the Second World War was almost three years old and the army had not yet fought the Germans, and apart from one terrible morning at Dieppe that August, would not until another year had passed. Casualties in the Pacific and in the RCAF had been higher, but were nowhere near the catastrophic losses Canadians had braced themselves for in 1939. Meanwhile, amidst much talk about sacrifice, the reality at home was full employment, higher wages, and a booming retail economy where rationing and shortages had only just begun to pinch.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA

This ad was so popular that Oneida Ltd. received several thousand requests for copies. The future promised not only the return of sweethearts but also limitless access to commodities.

When the war erupted in September 1939 there had been no calls at all for conservation or thrift. In *Maclean's* the editors had expressed a typical sentiment at the time, urging readers to "carry on" – a

Late in the war advertising began to promise that the technical ingenuity unleashed by the war would lead to a future of fantastic new consumer goods. Women in advertising were more often depicted in their traditional role as mother and homemaker than in nontraditional roles such as factory worker or army volunteer.

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Meanwhile we're planning your Dream Kitchen...
THE METAL CAN on a gas mask—the ingenious filter which keeps the air pure from poisonous fumes—is one of *many* war items being manufactured by General Steel Wares these days and nights.
But in between times, General Steel Wares craftsmen make mental notes of bright new ideas for your postwar kitchen. Even while our designers assist in developing marvellous new products to help save lives on fighting fronts—they just *can't help* dreaming up wonderful improvements for your postwar kitchen.
You can be sure that when peace bells ring out around the world—the old, familiar "GSW" trademark will still be your best guide to the finest kitchen and home equipment which your war savings will buy.
GSW QUALITY
Keep your VICTORY BONDS piling up
Keep your eye on GENERAL STEEL WARES LIMITED

28
"GO ON, SPEND IT... what's the difference?"
CANADIANS . . . the time has come when every nickel, dime and quarter you spend needlessly is money spent in the cause of our enemies! NOW, more than any time since this war began, national THRIFT is essential.
And THRIFT begins with those little things you needlessly buy from day to day—THRIFT begins in the home, in the kitchen, in the clothes you wear. From now on, resolve that needless spending is out! Your personal war job is to save every cent you can . . . and invest those savings in War Savings Stamps!
Yes, saving to buy War Savings Stamps is a vital war job for every woman, man and child in Canada. War Savings Stamps are a protection NOW and an investment for the future which will bring you back $5 for every $4 you invest.
So remember—let THRIFT be your watchword! Every day, save a little—and invest those savings in War Savings Stamps. Buy War Savings Stamps from banks, post offices, druggists, grocers and other retail stores.
Buy WAR SAVINGS STAMPS EVERY WEEK
SAVING IS SERVING
NATIONAL WAR FINANCE COMMITTEE

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phrase that had been popular in Britain during the Great War. Carry on and buy a new car, for instance, since "the best service that can be rendered is to keep our national economic structure functioning as normally as possible." A year later, one of the largest voluntary organizations in the country, the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, urged Canadians to "buy victory now," not with war bonds, but by purchasing British-made goods. "The clothes you wear, the beverages you drink, the presents you give this Christmas could help win the war. Do you realize that the expenditure of only 50 cents a day on British goods by each Canadian could make a profound difference to Britain's financial position?"

With the Depression finally over and jobs available for anybody who wanted one, Canadians in the early years of the war had more money than ever and nothing but encouragement to spend. "Money just rolled in," one man recalled years later. "In the war we lived good. Real good." Indeed, "Enjoy life!" was the tag line on a 1940 DeSoto ad, depicting happy passengers in a new sedan, hurtling through the spring, published in Canada even as the British Expeditionary Force was, in Churchill's phrase, "hurled into the sea" by the Nazi thrust into France. Overseas, the moment of supreme crisis was at hand; in Canada, retail sales were the highest they had been in ten years.

After the fall of France in early 1940, orders from Britain for munitions of all kinds poured in, but for more than a year Canadian manufacturers, so many of whom had been idle through the long lifeless years of the Depression, were able to meet these demands without seriously interrupting the flow of consumer durables. In fact, the next year would be one of the best ever for the sales of washing machines, stoves, refrigerators, toasters, and other appliances. As late as June 1941, even as the Germans stormed east towards Moscow, the editors of *Automotive Trade* wrote reassuringly that business could go on as usual, there being no evidence that immediate changes were required.

In the opinion of Mackenzie King's government, however, immediate changes *were* required. All economic signs pointed to the beginning of an inflationary cycle. In the Great War runaway inflation had afflicted life on the home front, and King, having promised Canadians a war of "limited liability," feared the domestic consequences of inflation in this war. King's government vested the task of keeping inflation down in one of its most powerful agencies: the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, and its new chairman, Donald Gordon. In the summer of 1942, King personally intervened to release Gordon from his position as deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, and for the remainder of the war Gordon worked tirelessly to regulate the country's retail economy.

The government likened needless shopping to treason (left), but advertisers devised ingenious new methods of marketing, claiming that their products were essential to the war effort. At right, All-Bran gives you what you need to keep working, while Gruen watches restore the bonds of love and romance, even across oceans.

"Tonight I leaned across 10,000 miles and kissed you!"
This will be a Christmas—more than any other Christmas—
THE GRUEN WATCH COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED
GRUEN
THE PRECISION WATCH

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Of all the Ottawa Men – the civil service elite recruited for the duration of the war from the ranks of finance and industry – Gordon became the most visible, his picture looking back from the newspaper almost daily. "The great tragedy of our time," he wrote in the first issue of *Consumers' News*, the newsletter of the board's consumer branch, "is that no democracy has been able to understand or to accept the demands of total war until its homes were under actual bombing attack." In Gordon's view, modern war required extreme sacrifices. It meant the subordination of every consumerist whim to the war effort. Every cent not spent on war savings bonds, every yard of fabric that made dresses rather than uniforms, every gallon of gasoline pumped into a passenger car rather than a military truck, materially aided the Axis.

Among Gordon's first duties was to explain to the public the necessity of putting a ceiling on prices in order to combat inflation. "You, who are listening to these words," he said in a radio address on November 28, 1941, "will be going into the fight next Monday ... and make no mistake, you will be on one side or on the other. In this fight against inflation you cannot be a neutral. You will either be helping to save yourself, your family and your country from a terribly calamity – or you will be working for the enemy." Monday was December 1, 1941. On Sunday, December 7, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Perhaps that was the week that Canadians on the home front really went to war. Only then, as the war assumed global proportions, as procurement orders from Britain intensified, and as the American economy began its astonishingly rapid conversion to military production, did Canadians begin to experience the full impact of the total mobilization of their economy for war. Production of electric refrigerators plummeted from an all-time high of 64,000 in 1941 to 350 by 1943, while the number of home radios produced dropped from half a million in 1940 to none in 1944. Of course the most striking difference was the almost total absence of new passenger-car production after 1941. Canadians bought 300,000 new cars in the first three years of the war.

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In 1943 they bought about 900, and those were strictly reserved for civilians with essential needs. In addition the government instituted coupon rationing for sugar, coffee, and tea in the summer of 1942, butter later that year, and meat in May 1943.

Canadians did not respond to the board's regulations as enthusiastically as is sometimes supposed. Officers of the board's consumer branch, a nationwide organization of women dedicated to monitoring the price ceiling, endured incessant complaints from consumers about the price and quality of goods (one officer summed it up by defining a "sissy" as someone "who resigns from the WPTB Committee to join the Commandos") and the board investigated thousands of businesses for violating the price ceiling. Against express rules, people bartered, sold, raffled, and made gifts of their ration coupons; they hoarded goods, bought from black markets, or took advantage of the "grey market" (where a friendly retailer might, for instance, keep scarce goods under the counter for customers willing to pay a little more), and a man in Toronto was fined $100 because he managed to get a ration card for his dog.

However, even where rationing regulations were obeyed, they did not hurt much. Coffee and tea rations, for instance, permitted everyone over age twelve enough for about ten to twelve cups of each per week, and there was nothing to stop anyone from getting an extra cup (although no more than one per sitting) at one of the country's proliferating diners and restaurants, whose business tripled during the war. Butter and sugar rations permitted half a pound per person per week, and only in rural areas when canning season came around were there many complaints about the quantity of sugar. In the summer of 1943, in order to meet export demands for the U.K., the government introduced meat rationing at home, but this was intended to reduce individual consumption by just 15 to 20 percent. Even gasoline rations at their tightest never

What's coming is . . . PLENTY!
MAYBE not this year. Maybe not next. But sometime we're going to win this war — and what's going to happen then is plenty.
Plenty of coffee, tea, bananas, butter, lard. Yes, and plenty of hardwood washable clothes. All the things we had before it started, and others we never had. Plenty of good cheap housing — thanks to new building methods. Plenty of light practical inexpensive cars, trailers and carriages — thanks to wartime expansion of aluminum production. Plenty of cheap fast air transportation — thanks to the rapid development of the aviation industry.
It's going to be a good world — a world of plenty — a world worth all the sacrifice that's being made. So if you can't get some of the things you've learned to count on, don't feel alone. It's a small price to pay for what's coming.
•
Right now many hardpressed fabrics are going to the Armed Forces because they have that superior touch of protection that really fit. Fortunately, however, there are still generous stocks of hardpressed fabrics available to civilians. When you do buy a shirt or coverall or a dress, try to get one that's Sanforized. It's just as important in good wash from shrinkage as to avoid hoarding.
·SANFORIZED·

According to this ad, the war's sacrifice is "a small price to pay for what's coming": a future of limitless material abundance for consumers. In the world of advertising, the war seems to have been fought as much for things as for freedom.

seemed intolerable, permitting most drivers 455 litres per year, enough for more than 3,200 kilometres of driving.

Nor was the rest of the retail economy as tight as we sometimes remember. Even as Canadian war production soared to levels that no one in 1939 could have ever imagined, Canadians found plenty of reasons to spend as well as save. Retail spending increased in 1942, as it had every year since the war began. It rose again in 1943 and in 1944. By the time the war ended in 1945, Canadian consumers were spending 50 percent more than they had been six years earlier, even after accounting for inflation. After 1941 new durables like cars and appliances were nearly impossible to get, but the fact that retail sales continued to rise indicates how intensely consumers spent on the narrower range of goods that were still available.

Over the course of the war, restaurant business tripled; jewellery, women's clothing, shoe, and drugstore sales doubled; and paid admission in movie theatres leapt to 208 million in 1944 from 138 million in 1939.

Between rationing, shortages, and government pressure discouraging spending, how did consumerism not just survive, but also sometimes even prosper during the war? Not surprisingly, manufacturers responded to the world crisis with an avalanche of war-themed products, ranging from sensible gifts such as shaving kits and watches for servicemen to the truly bizarre and downright tacky ("V for Victory" haircuts and "Patriot Pads" for women). Advertisers were particularly ingenious about devising ways of encouraging patriotic shoppers to part with their paycheques, stressing that buying their particular product was neither wasteful nor unpatriotic, but a contribution to the war effort, even a sacrifice that consumers made for freedom. "Your hands now need Campana's balm *more than ever*," reads a typical ad, depicting a woman hunched over a machine tool in one corner and accepting candy from a gentleman caller in the other. Phrases like "now more than ever" became the stock and trade of wartime advertising: one needed the special properties of consumer goods even more urgently in wartime than in peace. For every government ad urging conservation and thrift, there were dozens more insisting that spending rather than saving was the most important contribution a person could make to the war effort.

When they had nothing to sell to the public, manufacturers such as General Motors and Ford responded with imaginative "goodwill" advertising, emphasizing their enormous contributions to the war effort. As victory grew closer, advertisers began to depict a world of the future where the technical ingenuity unleashed by the war would be transformed into astonishing new consumer goods.

Like advertisers, retailers evaded accusations of wastefulness by arguing that they performed duties essential to a nation at war. Restaurants and grocers kept war workers in the pink with good, nutritious food, while druggists did it with pills and potions. Beauty parlours and jewellers maintained morale. Booksellers kept the public informed. Stationers provided for the smooth operating efficiency of the nation's bureaucracy. While the Wartime Prices and Trade Board stressed that consumers must buy only what they need, many retailers attacked the notion that moderate consumption was harmful. One ad copy read that "sane" conservation was "useful patriotism," implying that there was an insane variety that was not. A writer for *Canadian Jeweller* mused that he could make a "tidy sum" with a series of articles suggesting that war bonds be exchanged in place of engagement rings, but he wondered how far such trends were likely to go. Would the public be persuaded that buying luxuries is unpatriotic? "Man lives by certain civilizing influences," he warned. "These include the luxuries of the daily newspaper, art galleries, and fine pictures; music and theatrical entertainment; movie shows; and rapid transit, motor cars, airplanes, time saving appliances, even a knife, a spoon, a few serving plates, an ornament or two for various parts of the house. We must not permit the public to forget jewellery ... to have a good heart for war work, people must have something extremely desirable to fight for," by which he meant access to luxurious commodities.

This became a central theme of advertising late in the war: the equation of consumer choice with political freedom. One advertisement in a trade journal urged Canadians to fight harder for the "pleasures of freedom," pleasures depicted as a deluge of consumer goods. One after another, advertisements argued that what made Canada superior to the Nazi slave state

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was the material wealth its citizens enjoyed, and that this, too, was one of the things for which the war was being fought.

"Next to winning the war and the peace, our greatest responsibility is to preserve our Canadian way of life which revolves around the system of initiative and enterprise," wrote the editors of *Drug Merchandising*, a retail trade journal, or, as one advertisement in *Maclean's*, referring to the "four freedoms" of the Atlantic Charter put it: "four freedoms aren't enough!" An essential fifth freedom, the freedom of free enterprise, must also be defended. "So let's boil it all down to this," the ad reads, "the right of free choice ... to choose our opinions and our words, our religion, our homes, our clothes, our books and breakfast foods, friends, and amusement." In short, the war against Nazi fascism was much more than a struggle for political democracy: it was a struggle for a way of life in which mass consumerism played a crucial role.

In postwar mythology, the mystique of home-front sacrifice holds an exalted position. We remember how Canadians at home pulled together, worked longer hours, endured rationing and shortages, collected scrap and fats and bones, bought only war bonds, and sacrificed everything else to share the burden with the boys overseas. But the reality of the home front, of a booming consumer economy for the first half of the war and a surprisingly vibrant one for the second, of restaurants, clubs, and cinemas full to capacity throughout, sits uneasily beside the more patriotic image of self-sacrificing civilians.

Or was it possible to make sacrifices in the realm of consumption? Canadians had never enjoyed an era of guiltless mass consumption; their consumption had always been moderated by a variety of economic and social concerns about the things they bought. But by the 1940s, consumerism was nonetheless an important part of Canadians' everyday lives, and their consumerist impulses were highly developed indeed. Women in particular had long since assumed the duties of primary consumer for the household (one 1939 advertisement depicted a woman in her bridal gown under the words "Purchasing Agent – just appointed") and they accounted for 85 percent of retail spending. After the Great War, annual Armistice Day[1] ceremonies and the thousands of war memorials erected in every city and town in Canada imbued Canadians with a profound sense of the inherent nobility of sacrifice, and a belief that the willingness to sacrifice was the measure of loyalty to one's country. On the home front, however, sacrifice could mean many things, from separation from a husband or son to working in a munitions plant. But it could also mean having to cope without a replacement for a refrigerator on the fritz, and indeed having to make the difficult choice between buying a war bond or buying a consumer product that advertisers sensibly argued was also a contribution to the war effort. Canadians surged forward to fight the Second World War in a thousand ways. Perhaps it should not surprise us that for many people on the home front much of the war, and much of their war effort, seemed to have a great deal to do with being a consumer.

"CRASH ACTION"
FOR THE CANADIAN ARTILLERY
FORD MOTOR COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED
LARGEST PRODUCERS OF MILITARY VEHICLES IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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With nothing to sell, firms like Ford launched goodwill campaigns to highlight their contributions towards winning the war. Here Ford vehicles go into action against the Germans. The illustrator was Jack Bush, later to become one of the foremost abstract painters of his generation.

Graham Broad teaches history at King's University College at the University of Western Ontario. He is widely considered to be among the world's foremost authorities on Canadian retail trade journals, circa 1939–1945.

[1] Initially called Armistice Day, for most of the 1920s it was merged with Thanksgiving, then a floating holiday at the government's discretion. In 1931 it was renamed Remembrance Day.

Et Cetera

Canada's War: the Politics of the Mackenzie King Government 1939–1945 **by Jack Granatstein. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1990.**

Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War **by Jeffrey Keshen. UBC Press, Vancouver, 2004.**

They're Still Women After All: the Second World War and Canadian Womanhood **by Ruth Roach Pierson. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1986.**

Great Scott: a Biography of Donald Gordon **by Joseph Schull. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1979.**

THE PIERRE BERTON AWARD 2005 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

CANADA'S NATIONAL HISTORY SOCIETY established an award in 1994 for distinguished achievement in popularizing Canadian history. Canadian author Pierre Berton, the first recipient, agreed to have his name associated with the award in subsequent years. Other recipients of the Award are:

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The CRB Foundation, Montreal, 1997
Bob Johnstone, Toronto, 1998
(no award 1999)
Peter C. Newman, British Columbia, 2000
CBC / Radio Canada, for Canada: A People's History, 2001
The Canadian Society for Civil Engineering, 2002
Charlotte Gray, Ottawa, 2003
Jack Granatstein, Toronto, 2004

Individuals or organizations may be nominated whose written work has brought Canadian history to a national audience through such means as publications, film, radio, television, theatre, or the web in either official language.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2005 Pierre Berton Award. In addition to the name and address of the nominee, nominations must be accompanied by detailed information in support of the candidate. A biography or curriculum vitae, newspaper or magazine articles, or letters of support outlining the achievements of the nominee would be welcome. There is no nomination form.

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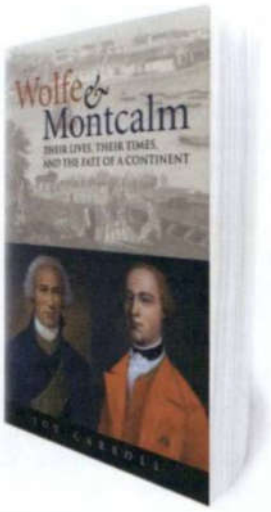


Wolfe & Montcalm: Their Lives, Their Times and the Fate of a Continent
By Joy Carroll
Firefly Books, Richmond Hill, Ontario
296 pp., illus., $24.95 paper

FOREVER ENTWINED

The average human heart beats seventy-two times a minute – an estimate that should be raised when reading this book's account of the battle for the Plains of Abraham. For deep into Joy Carroll's disciplined yet meandering study, the narrative takes a turn for excitement, shaking the dust off two and a half centuries since the tide turned on France's fortunes in America.

Carroll, a Toronto-based history writer and novelist, is right in her element in this true romance that she undertook six years ago. While researching for a book about Quebec in the eighteenth century, she noticed a shortage of material portraying James Wolfe and Louis-Joseph Montcalm – the "stars" and opposing commanders of the Battle of Quebec – as real people with emotions, relationships, and personalities. So she wrote one.

An unmarried commoner who died at thirty-one in his moment of glory, James Wolfe was the "dazzling young patriot" handpicked to unseat the French from their perch on the Quebec heights ("the strongest country in the world," said Wolfe) and give a leg up to an expanding British Empire.

A lanky, flirty, and sickly man, Wolfe got himself noticed after penning severe and perceptive critiques of his superior officers' mistakes. He later won fame for a "mad dash" in combat that helped Britain retake colonial Louisbourg from the French.

Surrounded by brigadiers who looked down on him, Wolfe had plenty of woes during his fatal campaign, as the author demonstrates with direct quotes and third-party accounts. Promised support did not arrive in time, and Wolfe's own strategic miscalculations during the summer of 1759 cost the lives of hundreds of soldiers. The general himself nearly died of an undiagnosed illness before staging a surprise recovery and launching his unexpected attack from west of Quebec's town walls – an offensive that should not have worked, but for a remarkable string of blunders on the French side.

Montcalm, who was half again Wolfe's age and a father of ten, was a dutiful aristocrat who reluctantly accepted the job of defending New France. He would die, like his counterpart, from wounds suffered on the Plains of Abraham.

Prior to and during the Seven Years' War against Britain, France was considered rich, but Carroll explains that the kingdom was all but bankrupt and, worse, lacked talented politicians. The profligate but likable King Louis XV appears, along with his influential paramour, Madame de Pompadour: both forced to sell off personal possessions to cover government debts. As France could scarcely keep pouring money into the "endless forests" of New France that returned so little profit, the colony was unofficially viewed as expendable.

"How innocent *les habitants* were," Carroll writes of Quebec's peasants, "to expect a crusading army from a king who was totally disenchanted with their homeland."

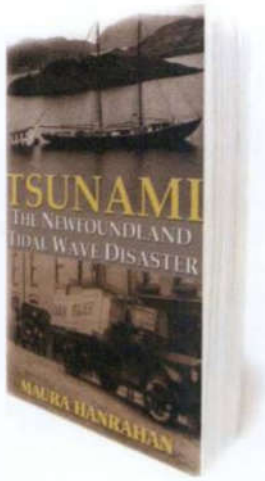
The colony's local administration was corrupt and decadent. There is the jealous governor plotting to undermine Montcalm and steal his glory,

and the intendant robbing the king's stores and making his cohorts rich. Some of these rogues later faced sweet justice, to the author's apparent glee.

One fact that emerges is that Britain may not have triumphed because of any inherent superiority in government or high command. Glory was largely owed to two men: one was William Pitt, the firebrand prime minister with a vision of empire and the political might to keep the British government on course. The other was, of course, James Wolfe.

If one complaint sticks, it is a subjective one: the author has a novelist's tendency to read her characters' minds and express their thoughts. But this is not rampant, and the research is grounded in original sources. What's more, the approach has worked before with Wolfe's story, most notably in Simon Schama's *Dead Certainties*.

Reviewed by **J.D. Gravenor**, a writer and editor who divides his time between Montreal and Ottawa.



Tsunami: The Newfoundland Tidal Wave Disaster
by Maura Hanrahan
Flanker Press, St. John's, 2004
229 pp., $16.95 paper

Swept away

If I were Margaret Rennie Saint, I would have a deep-rooted fear of water. On the full-moon night of November 18, 1929, four-year-old Margaret was found tucked in her bed in her second-floor bedroom, unconscious. Her mother, two brothers, and one sister were downstairs, drowned. Margaret's house was floating in the harbour. It had been swept out to sea and then returned – dumped by the most damaging tsunami in recorded Canadian history.

The tsunami was triggered by an underwater earthquake that occurred at 5:05 P.M. Newfoundland time and registered 7.2 on the Richter scale. The quake's epicentre was about 250 kilometres south of the island, and was felt as far away as New York and Portugal. Travelling at tremendous speeds that slowed and steepened in shallow waters, a wall of water slammed into Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula around 7:30. The tsunami came in three pulses, but the first wave wreaked the most havoc.

While on a smaller scale than December's tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the one that hit Newfoundland seventy-six years ago shares many similarities in terms of the tragedy of lost lives, broken families, and ruined communities. In Newfoundland, twenty-seven people, mainly women and children, were killed, almost fifty communities were affected, many houses were destroyed, and miles of fishing gear, stages, and stores were washed away. Of immediate concern were the winter provisions. These were isolated outports where barrels of berries, root crops, and salt cod put down over the summer months meant security for a hard winter. But much of this was washed out to sea, together with a winter's worth of wood and coal. Unlike the tsunami overseas, the world did not find out about the disaster until days later.

Using a blend of thoroughly researched historical fact, survivor interviews (including Margaret Rennie Saint), and recreated dialogue and scenes (anthropologist Hanrahan is from the region and is familiar with the physical and vernacular landscape), *Tsunami* takes the reader on an emotional ride covering that fateful day and the days immediately following.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first, Hanrahan sets the scene in those many outports around dinnertime: a mother sewing, a clutch of children playing soccer, two boys bent on retrieving a neighbour's sheep, their reactions to the tremors, the confusion and horror that reigns when the wave hits. Part Two details the many tragedies that befell Taylor's Bay and how, in an instant, twelve of the seventeen houses and many of the inhabitants were gone, and outlines the heroic efforts of a local nurse to care for survivors in shock. In the final part, which deals with the aftermath and the government response, Hanrahan weaves in actual letters from officials and newspaper reports.

Hanrahan provides readers with a thoughtfully written afterword, detailing her sources of information for each of the characters used and noting instances in which invention was required. Several appendices provide further details on the disaster and references the sources consulted. Historic photographs add another layer of authenticity to this extraordinary chronicle.

One small quibble is that the map at the front of the book is a rather poorly reproduced modern road map that omits several of the place names mentioned in the text. The addition of a larger-scale topographic map would have been preferable to help the reader locate and understand the vulnerability of some of these low-lying coastal communities.

In addition to producing the book to mark the event's seventy-fifth anniversary, Hanrahan writes that her incentive came from the people of the Burin: both older readers who remember the disaster and younger ones interested in their own history. Hanrahan's style of combining creative nonfiction techniques with a careful eye to the factual record will reward any reader interested in this historic maritime tragedy.

Reviewed by **Alison Dyer**, a freelance writer and broadcaster who has a master of science in physical geography and lives in St. John's, Newfoundland.

The Return of the Nonsuch: The Ship that Launched an Empire. By Laird Rankin

In 1669, the *Nonsuch*, a ship little bigger than your living room, returned to England from Hudson Bay laden with enough furs to attract investors to the idea of trading into Hudson Bay for a whole lot more furs. Thus was born the Hudson's Bay Company, the enterprise that once controlled a third of Canada's land mass. Three hundred years later, what better idea to commemorate the anniversary of this fortuitous voyage than to replicate the *Nonsuch* in England and bring her to Canada. As author Laird Rankin relates in this expanded, updated, and newly illustrated edition of his original 1974 memoir, building and sailing a seventeenth-century ship in the twentieth century was – to use the polite word – "challenging." The crew got bolshie, officials got shirty, the ship got stranded in shallow waters, and even, when it was transported overland to the Pacific, got wedged under an overpass. However, for its crew, and for Rankin, who coordinated the *Nonsuch*'s tour, it was the adventure of a lifetime, and for the crowds who poured out to see it, an extraordinary opportunity to encounter a facsimile of the past in 3-D. To see the *Nonsuch* today, you have to travel to Winnipeg where it rests in a specially designed gallery in The Manitoba Museum. This book, however, is much more portable.

Heartland Associates, Winnipeg, 2004. 140 pp., illus., $24.95 paper

Lunch with Lady Eaton: Inside the Dining Rooms of a Nation. By Carol Anderson and Katharine Mallinson

At last – the recipe for Red Velvet Cake! – the pièce de résistance at Eaton's restaurants, which no Eaton's employee was allowed to divulge on pain of d ... well, certain unpleasantness, at any rate. But, what the heck, Eaton's is toast, and here's the recipe, on page 197. Enjoy without fear. There's more to *Lunch with Lady Eaton* than recipes, however. Anderson and Mallinson have created a delightful social history of a bygone era when men were men and women were ladies who wore gloves and hats to shop downtown and, of course, partake of refreshment in one of Eaton's grand dining rooms like the Round Room in Toronto or the Grill Room in Winnipeg. More than high-toned nosheries, these rooms were often architectural gems, designed by architects of note, and planned down to the Limoges china to create a new dining aesthetic for the burgeoning middle classes. Behind it all was Flora McCrea Eaton, who, like her father-in-law, Timothy E., saw the future, saw that it was in retail, and – unlike her descendants – maintained an abiding interest in the company's welfare. Alas, all gone now, as this handsomely designed book attests, though at least one room, the Round Room, has been restored. A final request: could Lunch II, should there be one, please include the recipe for Eaton's wonderful turkey gravy? Thank you.

ECW Press, Toronto, 2004. 206 pp. $24.95 paper

All Hell Can't Stop Us: The On-to-Ottawa Trek and Regina Riot. By Bill Waiser

Sustained unemployment and poverty are a recipe for dissent, but when Canadians

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by Mary Percy Jackson, edited by Janice Dickin
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protested the deprivation of the 1930s, they found dissent little tolerated by established forces. In June 1935, a thousand relief-camp strikers boarded freight trains in Vancouver to take their grievances to Ottawa, but by the time they arrived in Regina in July, the RCMP, under orders from the federal government, made sure they got no farther. Peaceful protest turned into police violence, called by some the bloodiest day of the Depression, with two dead, hundreds injured, and thousands of dollars in property damage done. With access to previously unavailable RCMP archives and firsthand accounts of their experience from the marchers themselves, Saskatchewan historian Bill Waiser has produced a fresh and vivid account of the trekkers, their supporters, their uncompromising adversaries, and the bitter aftermath. The men never did get to distant Ottawa, but they have remained a source of historical inspiration for westerners disenchanted, as they often are, with a distant and seemingly uncaring federal government.

Fifth House, Calgary, 2004. 316 pp., illus., $29.95 paper

The Fur Trade in Canada: An Illustrated History. By Michael Payne

If European men hadn't had a fancy for fur hats, would there be the Canada we know and love today? Probably not. The trade for furs drove European exploration of the northern half of the North American continent and eventually set the pattern for settlement east to west. Many of Canada's cities were founded on the fur trade. It's a history that has been extensively documented, and certainly told before, but rarely with such concision, charm, and an eye to the reader of popular history. Payne, an Alberta historian specializing in fur-trade social history, has packed into ninety-six pages not only four centuries of a great enterprise, but the precontact roots in the network of First Nations' trading patterns, too. Best of all are the illustrations, which exceed in number the pages in the book. Most have been gleaned from Canada's leading museums and historic sites and ably substitute for the thousand words a picture is said to be worth.

James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Toronto, 2004. 96 pp., illus., $24.95 paper

100 Canadian Heroines
by Merna Forster

100 Canadian Heroines is a quick and easy-to-read education in Canadian women's history. A book of encyclopedic biographical references, it is fresh and informative, even to the seasoned feminist reader. The first woman in the British Empire to gain the rank of major (Margaret C. Macdonald, 1914) is a case in point. This is a book of achievements, and of women's determination to make their mark on society. As such, it is an exciting book of great characters. In particular, engineer Elsie MacGill not only designed airplanes, but took drawing lessons from Emily Carr in her spare time. The "Queen of the Hurricanes" supervised the production of 2,000 Hurricane Hawker fighter planes, mobilized in the Battle of Britain. Cross-dressing doctors, physicists, actors, Mohawk leaders—you name it, they're all here.

Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2004. 288 pp., $24.99 paper

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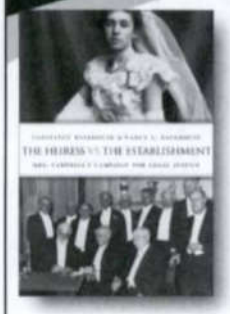

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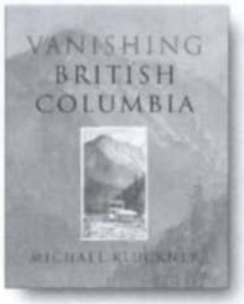

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Christopher Moore

Louis Robichaud: What a Premier Can Do

Last January I was surprised to read of the death of Louis Robichaud, the eloquent and charismatic little Acadian who was premier of New Brunswick from 1960 to 1970. I thought he had died years ago.

But Robichaud was only in his late seventies when he died. After being premier, he held a Senate seat, but he never became hooked on the drug of power or celebrity. If he receded from view after he left the premier's office, aged just forty-five, it was because he had achieved most of his ambitions. His achievements back in the sixties still command attention.

Not many provincial premiers will seem significant in forty years, particularly those from smaller provinces remote from national media. But I've been reading two biographies of Louis Robichaud recently, and how many provincial premiers have two biographies? They have rather different ideas on why Robichaud still looms large.

Professor Della Stanley's scholarly study *Louis Robichaud: A Decade in Power* emphasizes government and considers Robichaud as a case study of what a provincial premier can do. Michel Cormier's recent *Louis J. Robichaud: A Not So Quiet Revolution* is less heavily documented but more personal and more passionate, with extensive input from Robichaud himself. For Cormier, Robichaud's vital contribution was to be both symbol and facilitator of the Acadian renaissance.

Cormier begins with the personal impact Louis Robichaud had on the Cormier family. Robichaud's reform of provincial education standards meant that the salary Cormier's mother received as a rural schoolteacher in Cocagne, New Brunswick, doubled overnight. (She thought there was a misprint on her paycheque.) Cormier himself, like so many successful Acadian professionals today, launched his own career at another Robichaud creation, the Université de Moncton. He's now a rising journalist and broadcaster as a European correspondent for Radio-Canada.

But in the 1960s, observes Cormier, Acadian communities like his had more in common with Alabama or Kentucky than with Saint John or Fredericton. Beset by poverty, limited education, minimal social services, they were also politically powerless. As he

CP PHOTO/CHUCK MITCHELL

describes how Robichaud's provincial government began attacking poverty, lack of education, and lack of opportunity throughout the province, Cormier emphasizes the impact those reforms had on the mostly Acadian counties of northern and eastern New Brunswick.

Cormier also emphasizes how Robichaud opened paths for francophone New Brunswickers in New Brunswick (facing down anti-French backlash in a province where Acadians were barely a third of the population) but also nationally. Premier Robichaud made New Brunswick the only officially bilingual province and became a national statesman by presenting Acadians as a linguistic minority committed to their culture and language, but also to Canada and to federalism.

"When I was a child," writes Cormier in his theme-setting first sentence, the name of Robichaud received "the same reverence as that of Mahatma Gandhi." How many premiers will ever get that kind of tribute?

Della Stanley's biography disputes none of Robichaud's impact on New Brunswick's Acadians, but she suggests quite another reason to remember him. Robichaud was one of the postwar Canadian premiers who showed just what provincial governments could do when they put their minds to it.

In 1960, the New Brunswick legislature maintained its practice of meeting for just a single two-week session once each year. There, as in other provinces, provincial politics was a spare-time, part-time kind of thing. Civil servants had limited skills and few pressing duties because provincial governments simply did not do much. Schooling, public services, health, and welfare were run and paid for by county and municipal councils or private and religious charities. For New Brunswick, the consequences were dire. Many of its communities lacked the resources, the educational facilities, the leadership, and the administrative tools to attack their own backwardness. And the poorer they were, the less they could do.

Yet health, education, welfare, and social services are provincial responsibilities. By the 1960s, many provinces were beginning to awaken to the possibilities in expanded, modernized provincial administrations. Across Canada, provincial civil services and provincial programs grew rapidly, but New Brunswick's relative backwardness made the opportunity there all the greater. Robichaud's government, notably prompt and notably effective in expanding the scope of provincial programs, deserved the national attention it got.

Robichaud's "Equal Opportunity" program was partly about linguistic and cultural equality, but even more it meant transferring power and responsibility from ill-equipped local councils to a rapidly expanding government serving the whole province. In a few years, Robichaud's government combined new provincial tax revenues with federal transfer payments, applied them to province-wide programs in health, education, and social services, and built a professional civil service to run them. It meant a huge transfer of authority to the provincial government in Fredericton. But for the first time, there was a government actually able to do things for its citizens.

Perhaps the clearest proof of the new power of government was Robichaud's confrontation with industrialist K.C. Irving. Acadians appreciated one of their own who stood up to the anglophone billionaire and the taunts from his newspapers. But the real threat to Irving was a provincial government that for the first time had the resources, both financial and managerial, to stand up against resource giveaways and tax holidays if it chose to.

Today, many Canadians take for granted the presence of large, powerful provincial governments with professional bureaucracies, extensive taxing powers, and broad ambitions. In recent years, the most newsworthy premiers have been those most determined to attack that consensus, by cutting taxes, privatizing programs, and chopping services. The eventful decade of Louis Robichaud's premiership in New Brunswick is a reminder of how recently provinces emerged as governments to be reckoned with. And how much of the public infrastructures we often take for granted depends, not on Ottawa, but on how well or badly we are served by our provinces.

Louis Robichaud: A Decade in Power **by Della Stanley was published by Nimbus Publishing in 1984.** ***Louis J. Robichaud: A Not So Quiet Revolution*** **by Michel Cormier, translated by Jonathan Kaplansky, was published by Faye Editions of Moncton in 2004.**

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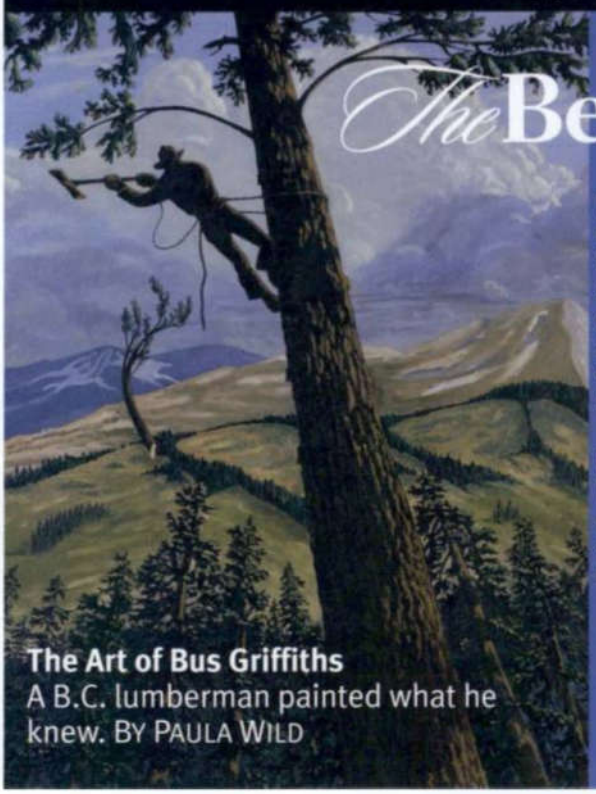

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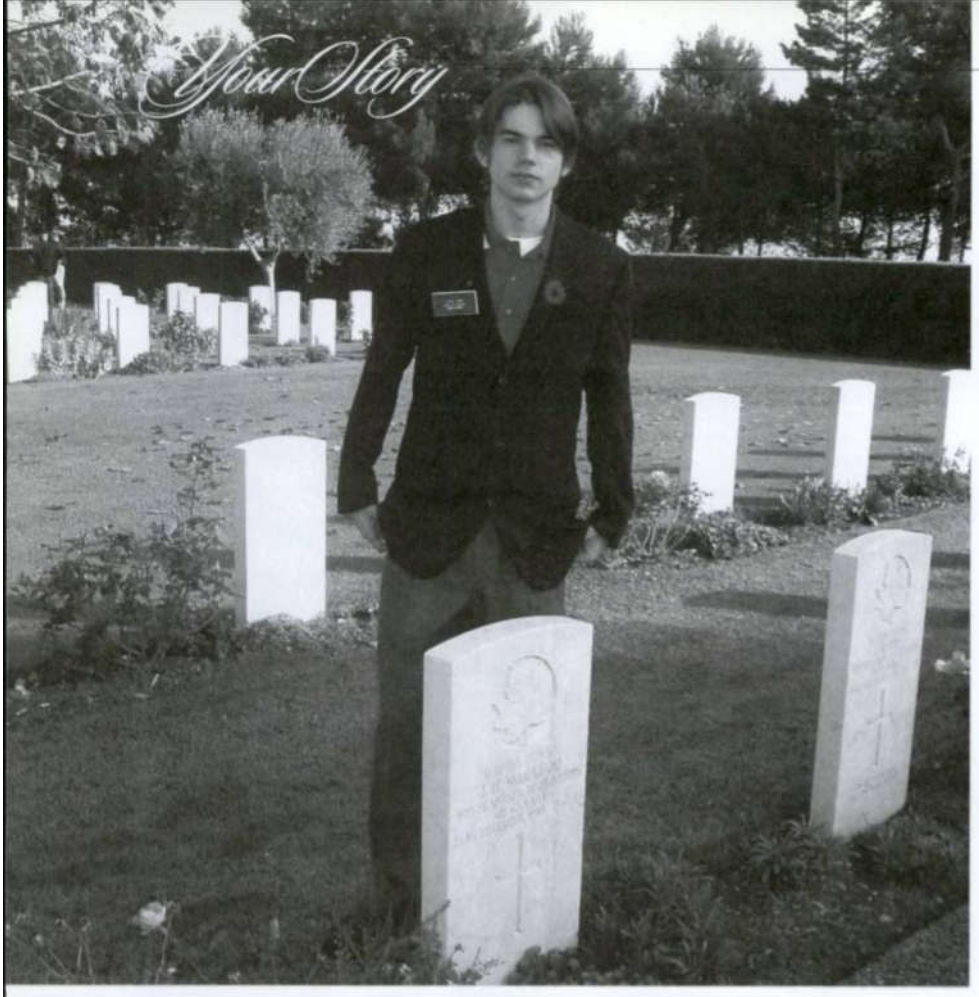

Author Jack Finn in front of John Harper MacLeod's grave.

In Search of The Youngest Soldier

Last fall I stood at the grave of John Harper MacLeod near Ortona, Italy. I was a student, among other students, teachers, writers, leaders, soldiers, and historians – all on a pilgrimage of remembrance. But there were many graves there, each one as worthy as another. So why were we standing at this grave, the grave of John Harper MacLeod? The answer to this question lay, in part, with me, because I chose Private MacLeod with a single idea in mind – that I would find the youngest soldier I could and write about him.

You see, I could never imagine what it would be like to be in a war, but I could imagine what it would be like to be nineteen. And in the Canadian Virtual War Memorial I found the name of a boy who was killed in action on December 26, 1943, during his nineteenth and last year of life. His name was John Harper MacLeod, and he was from Cobble Hill, Vancouver Island, the son of Alexander and Alexandra MacLeod. He was a private with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, number M101975. So with these three leads in hand – his home town, his parentage, and his regiment, I began to look for the details that would bring his story to life. I naively thought, in this age of information, that the hunt would be easy – type in *MacLeod* and out comes A, B, and C. Well, I was wrong. Hours on the Internet revealed little. I realized I would have to do things the old-fashioned way – in person.

So I went to the Seventy-second Seaforth Highlanders of Canada regimental headquarters in Vancouver, where I spoke with Corporal Chris Thompson and archivist Lloyd Hunter, but they could only confirm what I already knew – that Private MacLeod did indeed serve with their regiment from October 10 until December 26, 1943, when he was killed somewhere on the streets of Ortona. Dismayed but not deterred, I began to contact other Seaforth veterans who might have known him, but nobody did. They told me, instead, what they knew about Ortona and where they had been in the days between Christmas and the New Year in 1943.

"Was he at the dinner?" I was asked by one, but I didn't know.

My vice principal, Mr. Chris Campbell suggested I contact Mr. Mark Zuehlke, author of the book, *Ortona*, who theorized that Private MacLeod might have been killed at Dead Horse Square, where the Seaforths were engaged on Boxing Day. He suggested I talk to another Macleod – Ken MacLeod, no relation to my MacLeod, but a teacher and historian who knew a great deal about Ortona and the Seaforths. So, armed with Mr. Zuehlke's introduction, I contacted Ken MacLeod who gave me a new list of veterans to call – Bill Worton, Syd Thomson, Ozzie Rivers, Laurie Cross, and Bill Hughes. But no one remembered John Harper MacLeod. It was Bill Worton, however, who told me that a soldier with the number M101975 would most likely have been a reinforcement, sent in by another regiment. This was confirmed by Syd Thomson. It seemed that I had the wrong regiment.

Meanwhile, I was following leads at the community level. I discovered that Cobble Hill was a tiny hamlet in the Cowichan Valley, midway between Nanaimo and Victoria. With a name like MacLeod, John Harper, I presumed, was Scottish, so I began calling all the Presbyterian churches in Cobble Hill and the surrounding areas. I was looking for church records on the MacLeod family – the baptisms, marriages, and deaths in a pre-Internet world. Everyone I called was interested in the story and willing to help, but still there was nothing. So I expanded my search, calling all the churches in the Cowichan Valley regardless of their denomination or distance, speaking with more archivists and church secretaries. But still, nothing. I called Mrs. Priscilla Lowe, curator of the Cowichan Valley Museum in Duncan, and she called many old families and veterans from the Cobble Hill area in hopes that something might turn up. But still, nothing. I spoke with Mrs. Vir-

ginia Bonner, a long-time resident of Cobble Hill and author of two books on local history, and she, enthused, began to help me look for leads and clues on John Harper MacLeod.

"Maybe he changed his name," she said. When I asked why he would do that she informed me that there had been a lot of German families in the Cowichan Valley at that time and many of them had changed their names, apparently preferring Scottish names to English ones.

"Could he have been from one of those families?" she speculated. "Was he really a MacLeod?"

But I didn't know. Was it possible that I had both the wrong regiment and the wrong name? I began to worry.

My mother and I finally went to Cobble Hill, where we attended a Cowichan Valley Historical Society meeting. I explained my quest to the thirty some people there, but while several intriguing theories were put forward, nobody actually remembered the MacLeod family. I called two legion halls the next day and spoke with local veterans, Roy Bobolo, an Italian Canadian who fought in Holland, and Peter Owen, a retired school principal living in Cobble Hill who had served with the British. But still I had nothing. I went to the local newspaper office on the advice of Duncan publisher, Tom Paterson, and persuaded the editor of the *Cowichan Valley Citizen*, Brian Wilford, to run an article on the story, but still there was nothing. I read through four months worth of microfiche of the 1943–1944 Victoria *Daily Colonist* with the help of several librarians, and still I found nothing. I went to the oldest graveyard in Cobble Hill and looked at every tombstone, hoping I would find the names of Alexander and Alexandra MacLeod among them, but there was nothing. What seemed most disturbing was that the name John Harper MacLeod was neither written on the small cenotaph in Cobble Hill nor on the larger one in Duncan. There was simply a void of information about a young private who died sixty-one years ago last Boxing Day. There was, it seemed, nothing.

But somehow he had become important to me. He was the *almost* unknown soldier. The one whose name is known but little else. The one who slips through the annals of history and is forgotten by all those he fought for. And I realized I wouldn't forget him, and if I lived a thousand years I wouldn't forget what he did. He gave his youth, he gave his innocence, and eventually he gave his life so that I could enjoy mine. You see, there was a point when I could have stopped and chosen another soldier on which to write and fulfilled the assignment far more easily, but I couldn't because John Harper MacLeod had gained a deep foothold in my heart, and he would not leave. It was almost as if he said to me, "Don't forget about me too." But still, I did *not know* anything about him. If he had brothers and sisters. If his parents were strict or easy. If there was enough money or none. If he wanted to be a lawyer or a farmer. If he had a lot of friends or just one or two. If he was good in school. If he had a girlfriend. Maybe he wasn't from Cobble Hill at all, I concluded. Maybe he lied about his age and where he came from because he wanted to get into the army without his parents stopping him.

Jack Finn with Seaforth Highlander sergeants Smoky Smith and Bill Worton.

But this I did know and this I do know. I know that he died, a Seventy-second Seaforth Highlander of Canada on December 26, 1943, and I know he lies in a grave in the Moro River Commonwealth Cemetery. And I'm glad he died on Boxing Day for it means his last meal, if he got to have it, would have been Christmas dinner with his company in a half-demolished Italian church. At least it means he would have had a good last meal. I know also that he was just a kid, two years older than I am today, if he really was nineteen. So while I don't really know who he was, at the same time I do, as clearly as I know my own friends and family. Because John Harper MacLeod has become all the young men that I know, my friends and both of my brothers. Young men, who are not unlike who our veterans were, sixty years ago. He is an amalgam of all our personalities put together. He has my friend Mike Parolini's stoicism, my friend Patrick Murry's charm, my friend Derek Coulombe's creativity, and my friend Jeremy Taylor's loyalty. He has my brother Charlie's will to win, my brother Thomas' optimism, and maybe he might even have some of me in him too. That is why I could not choose another to write about, because to abandon him would be to abandon my friends, my brothers, and even myself.

He was the *almost* unknown soldier. The one whose name is known but little else. The one who slips through the annals of history and is forgotten by all those he fought for.

And then something happened. Something remarkable. Two days before my departure, someone called me from Cobble Hill. It was Peter Owen. He had asked around and two people had come forward, an elderly woman and a retired farmer – both of them long-time Cobble Hill residents. They had the same story: There had been a farm on Aros Road in the 1930s, just off Telegraph Road, where a family named MacLeod had lived. The owners of this farm were German, but they had changed their name to MacLeod – just as Virginia Bonner had speculated. The farmer had died before the war, but he was survived by his wife and two sons. One son joined the Canadian army and the other joined the Ger-

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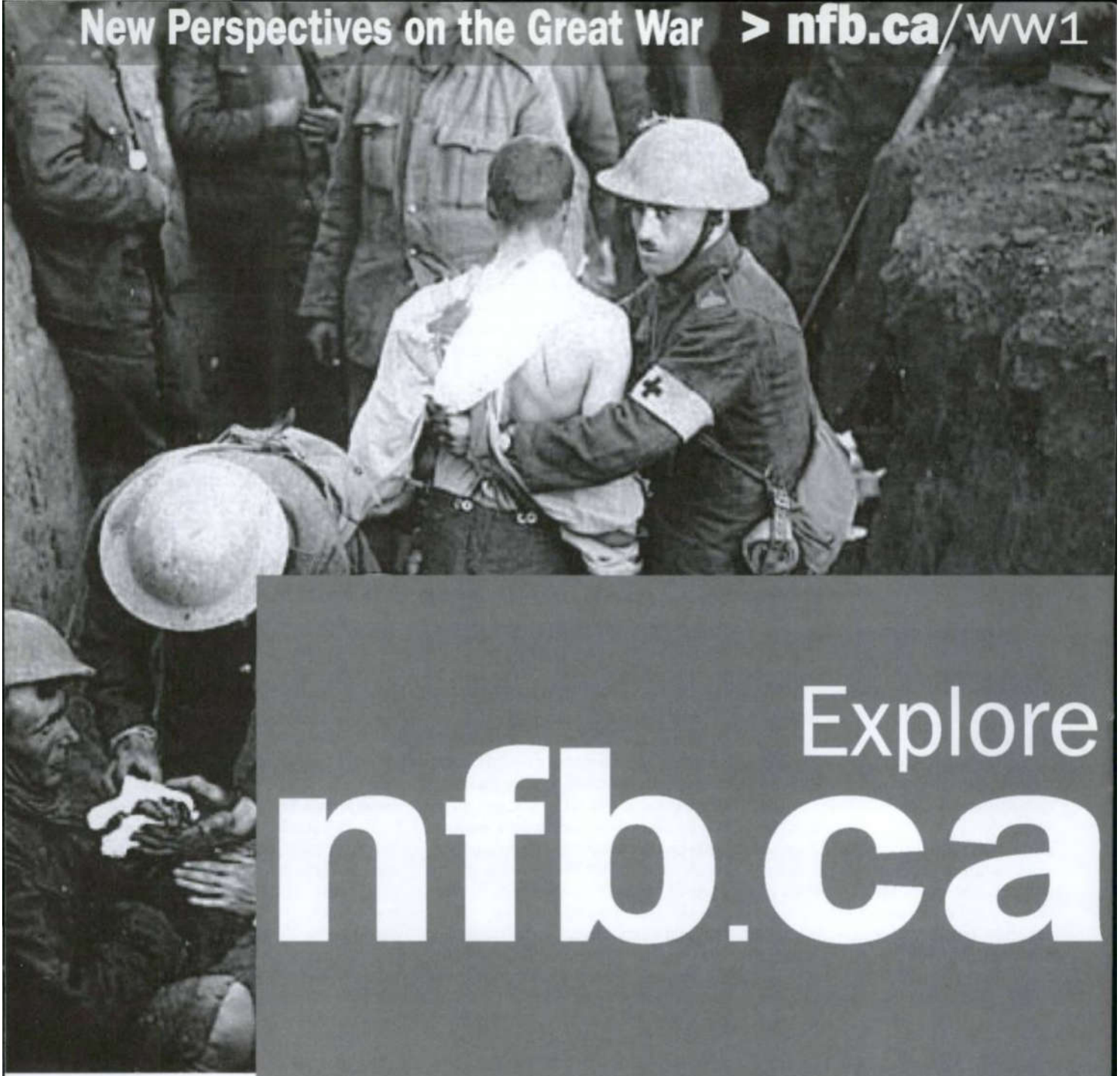

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man army, and during the course of the war, both of them were killed. The property was sold and later subdivided and their mother moved away.

"God knows where," said Mr. Owens. "She could have gone anywhere."

John Harper MacLeod, I can tell you this. I went to Cobble Hill and I spent time there. Barry's Garage is still the centre of town. My mother took me to the pub for lunch and nobody asked me for ID. That's a big deal in Canada, John. There's still a corner store next to Barry's Garage, and there's a cold beer and wine store and a barber shop across the street. There's a coffee shop too, but it's closed on Saturdays because the owners teach piano. And there's a place up the road that sells pottery with Cobble Hill stamped on the back of everything they make. So I bought a little pot there, John, and before I left Cobble Hill, I took some earth from the ground next to the cenotaph and this I brought and gave to you.

I missed a bit of school trying to track you down, and you eluded me. But you missed a lot of life for me, Private MacLeod, and I thank you. And so I promise you, that if this was your family, that if it was your brother who died for Germany and you for Canada, then I am sorry for what you went through. I cannot imagine what it would have been like for you and your brother. But if it is true that you are John Harper MacLeod of Cobble Hill, British Columbia, then your name belongs on the cenotaph at Cobble Hill. There are many there who will want it written and I am one of them.

By Jack Finn, a grade twelve student at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School in North Vancouver, B.C. Finn was chosen to represent the people of British Columbia as a youth delegate on the sixtieth anniversary pilgrimage to Italy in honour of the end of the Italian campaign of World War II. Before leaving for Italy, he was required to research a veteran from his province who fought, died, and was buried in Italy. John Harper MacLeod was that veteran.

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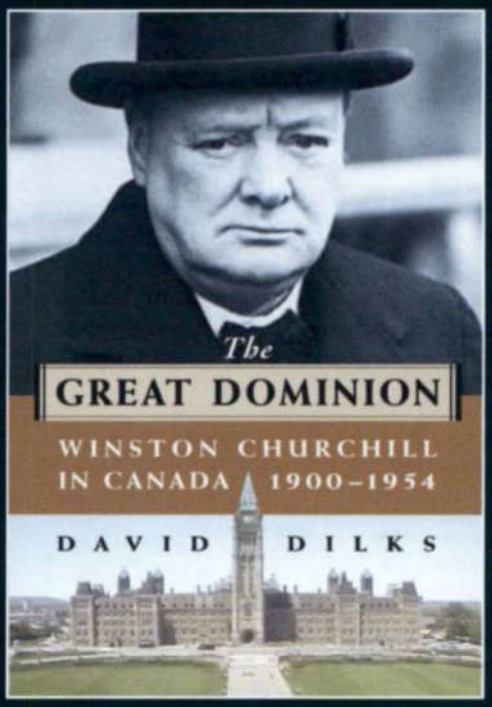

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Naval Gazing

The name Gaspé comes from the Micmac word for "where the land ends." But, as Mark Reynolds discovers, with a history of shipwrecks, fishing, and naval battles, it could mean "where the sea rules."

The people of Gaspé have survived on this mountainous peninsula for centuries, despite a conspiracy of harsh climate, economic exploitation, and indifferent politicians. No wonder the peninsula that juts out into the Gulf of St. Lawrence resembles a tongue, sticking out in an insolent expression of determination.

The Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site commemorates the naval showdown that delivered control of North America to the British in 1760, not far from where Cartier claimed it for the French two centuries earlier. Of the six French ships, including the *Machault*, that sailed that spring to retake Quebec after the loss on the Plains of Abraham the previous year, only three made it through the British blockade. The remaining vessels, short on supplies, took shelter in Chaleur Bay. The British Navy gave chase, and the two forces fought a running battle up the shallow channels of the Restigouche River for several days.

The museum holds a large section of the *Machault*'s hull, allowing visitors to walk though the interior of the French flagship. Items on display include weapons, tableware, clothes, and 240-year-old salt pork, part of the ship's stores rescued from the bottom of the river.

Political control established, economic exploitation could begin in earnest. One hundred and twenty five kilometres east along the Gaspé coast of Chaleur Bay is the village of Paspébiac. The small spit of land that protrudes into the bay was the headquarters of two globe-girdling fishing empires. Jerseyman Charles Robin set up his own fishing operation here in 1783. Competition arrived from his fellow Channel Islanders when the LeBouthillier brothers set up shop in 1838. The Acadian, Basque, and Loyalist communities that fished for Robin and his competitors were entirely dependent on them for food and supplies. The credit system, whereby fishermen were never able to pay off their debts to the company store, had disastrous consequences when the Charles Robin Company went bankrupt in 1886. Famine gripped the area, relieved only when rioting villagers broke in to the company stores for flour and food. Today the Paspébiac Fisheries Bank National Historic Site has ten structures, from a boat builder's to a blacksmith's shop, restored to look as they were in 1850. All are dwarfed by the enormous LeBouthillier warehouse.

Both Paspébiac companies had locations all along the coast, including a LeBouthillier post 95 kilometres further east, on Île

JEAN ALBERT

Le Musée de la mer at Pointe-au-Père

MICHEL JULIEN

Paspébiac Fisheries Bank NHS

Bonaventure, off the coast of Percé. A walk around the island will turn up views of the iconic arch of the Percé rock, an old cemetery, views of cavorting seals and possibly whales, and a colony of 250,000 gannets, which make the island's cliffs their home from May until October.

The drive 50 kilometres north from Percé to Forillon National Park is spectacular as the terrain enters what the locals call the Chic Chocs, an extension of the Appalachian Mountains. The challenges of daily life in this inhospitable place are amply demonstrated in the homes of Anse-Blancette and the Hyman General Store, restored to their 1918 appearance. Fishermen living here had to haul their catches up sheer cliff faces using ropes and winches. Walk out to the tip of the park and you can see the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse, one of many that dot the coast of the peninsula.

The Musée des phares (lighthouse museum) in La Martre is the *idée fixée* of curator Yves Foucreault. About 190 kilometres away from Forillon on the north coast of the peninsula, the red wooden lighthouse that sits in front of the local church in this small village is unique in North America as it is probably the last on the continent that still operates using a mechanical system of weights and pulleys. The museum has an impressive collection of navigational paraphernalia built largely on twenty years of Foucreault's single-minded determination. Visitors can learn how lighthouses worked, and hear personal details about the life of a lighthouse keeper from Foucreault, who interviewed the children who grew up in the red tower in La Martre.

One needn't look far for reasons why these sentinels were important. Further down the coast, at Pointe-au-Père, near Rimouski, is Le Musée de la mer de Pointe-au-Père, which commemorates the worst maritime disaster in Canadian history. When a Norwegian collier collided with the speedy *Empress of Ireland* in 1914, the liner went down in fourteen minutes, taking the lives of 1,012 people. Visitors can see artifacts recovered from the wreck, and climb the 128 steps of the lighthouse to gaze out to the spot in the Gulf of St. Lawrence where the *Empress* lies. The peaceful scene should not deceive – the *Empress* has claimed six divers' lives since 1914.

Mark Reynolds is a Montreal writer.

IF YOU GO ...

Highway 132 ties together the communities of maritime Gaspé like a loop. A tour might begin 350 kilometres northeast of Quebec City at Restigouche, near Chaleur Bay, or, alternatively, at Rimouski, 270 kilometres northeast on the St. Lawrence River's north shore. For information on places to see, accommodation, and special events contact:

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2004 ANNUAL REPORT

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Our achievements in these first ten years are worth celebrating:

- **Membership**, through subscriptions to the *Beaver*, have grown by almost 10% since 1994.
- **Revenues** from all operations have grown by more than $1 million to a record-setting $2.47 million in 2004. Revenues from the *Beaver* magazine have constituted 35 percent of that growth.
- **Benefits** to members have been expanded considerably: History book and video titles offered at up to 40 percent off retail prices through our General Store; Admission discounts to more than fifteen leading museums in Canada; A comprehensive on-line index of the full eighty-five-year inventory of the *Beaver*.
- **The Pierre Berton Award**, first established in 1994 and now the highest history honour in Canada, celebrated its tenth recipient just shortly before Mr. Berton's passing in November 2004.
- Since 1996, more than 100 of the country's best teachers have gained national recognition through the **Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History**. Today, the award is one of Canada's top teaching prizes.
- We've provided financial support for more than twenty local history projects, and hosted two national conferences of Canada's **provincial and territorial historical societies**, representing the efforts of nearly 42,000 volunteer activists involved in public history.
- Since 1997 we've created an **online community** that supports readers, teachers, and researchers with a wealth of resources and links to more history information. Last year, we introduced fully functioning e-commerce capabilities, making it easier for members to place orders and renewals – without all the paper!
- In December 2004 we introduced ***Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids***. With the support of TD Bank Financial Group, *Kayak* will be distributed free to elementary schools throughout 2005 – bringing its circulation to 13,500 before the second issue is printed.

2005: A year of publishing

Over the past year, the History Society continued to concentrate its efforts and energies on strengthening and enhancing its core publishing programs.

An ambitious, strategic plan to expand our publishing programs was developed in consultation with the History Society Board. The *Beaver* will continue to serve the dedicated history fan, while our online presence will be developed to serve educators and connect with new potential *Beaver* readers. Finally, the launch of *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids* will enable us to introduce Canadian history to our youngest audience (and their parents), and inspire a whole new generation of history enthusiasts.

Some publishing highlights from the past year:

- The launch of *Kayak: Canada's Magazine for Kids* attracted national media attention, and received widespread support from educators and parents. Peter C. Newman commented in a radio interview that Kayak was "exactly the right kind of approach to get children interested in history."
- HistorySociety.ca, which was expanded to include more stories, reader feedback, teaching materials, and links to travel and community events and activities attracted an average of 55,000 visitors per month.
- The new editorial departments at the front of the *Beaver* continue to generate feedback from readers. Many appreciate the diversity of new content, but encourage us to keep working on presentation and readability.
- We invested in a redesign of our marketing program and materials to better promote our magazines to new readers.
- We introduced the *Beaver Book and Gift Guide* to readers with the support of our advertisers.
- Associate editor Doug Whiteway was recognized as a finalist by the Western Magazine Awards for "Currents," in the category of Regular Column.

And coming up:

- Beginning with the next issue, the *Beaver* will be published in full colour;
- Marking its eighty-fifth anniversary of publication, the *Beaver* will unveil a new look in the Oct/Nov Issue;
- Our second *Book and Gift Guide* will be featured this fall;
- A special travel guide is planned for spring 2006.

As always, reader feedback informs much of our decision making. We hope members will continue to contact us

with their suggestions and observations as we introduce these innovations.

Other History Society beginnings for 2005

A significant part of the History Society's long-term strategy is to build from its publishing strengths and to develop new products to reach a wider public audience.

Our new children's magazine, ***Kayak***, is the first of three new initiatives toward this goal. The initial launch of the children's magazine was funded almost entirely with the generous contributions from the Department of Canadian Heritage, Historica Foundation of Canada, and Weston Limited. TD Bank Financial Group's investment will ensure the free distribution of *Kayak* to elementary schools across Canada for its first year. Subscriptions account for just over 55% of the total costs of the magazine in 2005.

In fall 2005, the History Society will launch its first online educational resource ***Beaver Treasures: A Fur Trade Story***. Beaver Treasures is a tenth anniversary project of the three Manitoba agencies entrusted with the Hudson's Bay Company collections: The Manitoba Archives, The Manitoba Museum, and the Society's *Beaver* archives. With the financial support of the Winnipeg Foundation and CN, the new online resource will bring many parts of the HBC history collections (including back issues of the *Beaver*) online for the first time – freely searchable for researchers interested in the fur trade, or interpreted through a guided series of pedagogical activities keyed to Canadian history studies at the secondary school level.

Our third publishing project, ***For The Love of History***, is an anthology of the selected works of the first decade of recipients of the Pierre Berton Award for achievement in popular history. This first book project developed in partnership with Random House Canada, will also be released fall 2005. History Society members will be able to order advance copies of the book. Watch for details in upcoming issues of the *Beaver*. Proceeds from sales will support the ongoing operations of the Pierre Berton Award program.

For both of our national recognition programs, the year ahead marks a new era.

The Pierre Berton Award 2005 ceremonies have been confirmed for Edmonton on Saturday, October 29, in conjunction with the third National History Conference, of which the History Society is a sponsor.

The Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Canadian History enters its tenth year in 2005. We intend to work with our partners at Rideau Hall, Bell Canada, and Library and Archives Canada to continue to grow the Awards as one of the highest history honours in the country.

Summary of financial position

The History Society remains in a solid financial position, having made significant progress on its plan to diversify its revenue sources to fund new projects.

2004 resulted in a modest budget surplus and the highest level of donation revenues in the history of the organization, largely due to the investments in the new children's magazine.

While we are anticipating greater fluctuation in the flow of revenues and expenses due to the startup of *Kayak* over the next couple of years, early indications signal a positive impact on long-term growth for the History Society, and correspondingly, our ability to make further reinvestments in the development of our flagship magazine.

Announcement

The president and CEO of Canada's National History Society is pleased to announce the appointment of Michel Groleau as art director of the *Beaver* magazine. Mr. Groleau brings a wealth of experience in magazine design, based on such titles as *Commerce*, *Montreal Magazine*, *InfoPresse*, and *Affaires Plus*. Mr. Groleau begins his work on the Beaver with this issue and will oversee the redesigned magazine that will be launched with our eighty-fifth anniversary issue in October 2005.

Our apologies!

The combination of postal service delays and the added volume of traffic in our circulation department due to the launch of *Kayak* during the pre-holiday period meant a number of renewal notices and gift offers arrived in your mailboxes well after the New Year. Most *Kayak* orders were processed and delivered to the post office early in December, with a final run of last-minute orders completed on December 17th. Rest assured we are committed to quality and efficient service to you and are taking every effort to correct these problems for the coming year.

Museum Discounts Membership in Canada's National History Society provides reduced admission to the following leading Canadian museums:

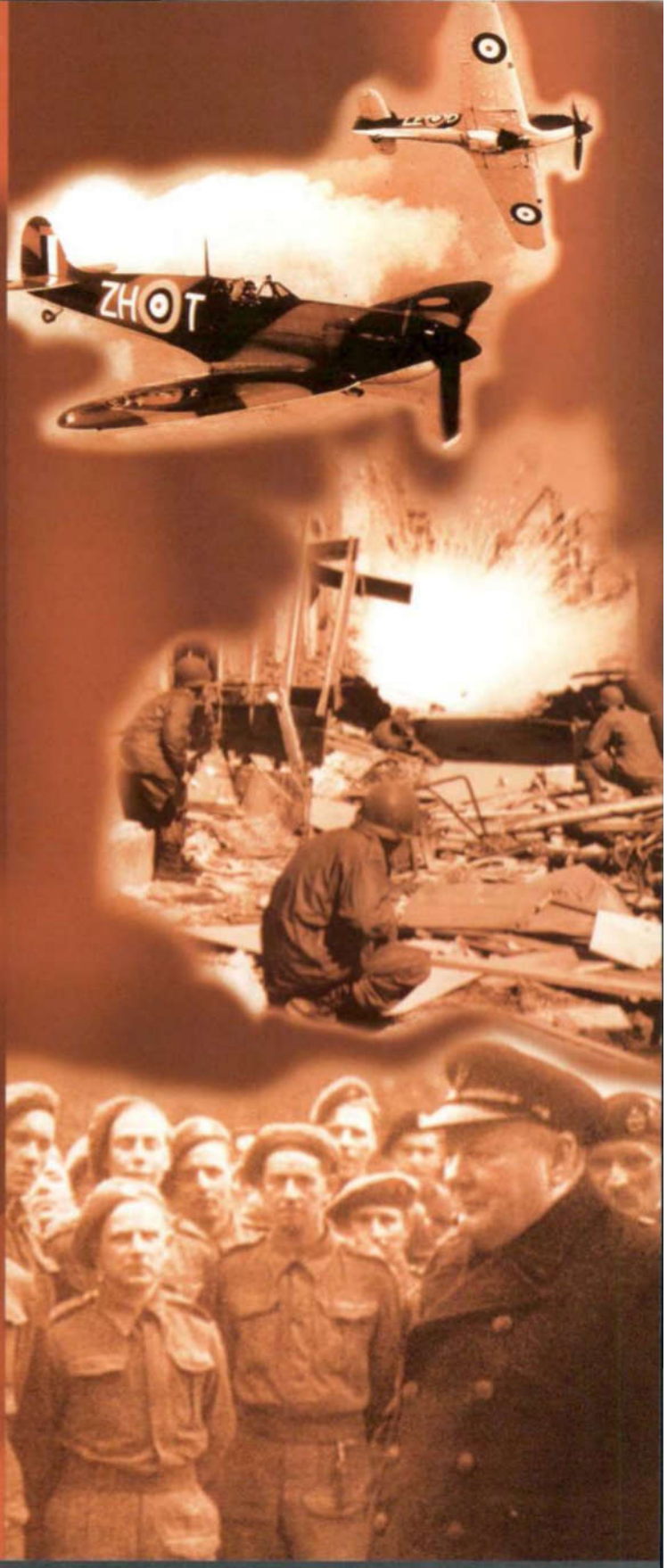
- Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria
- Vancouver Museum
- Vancouver Maritime Museum
- Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff
- Glenbow Museum, Calgary
- Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton
- Saskatchewan Western Development Museum: Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Yorkton
- Dalnavert Museum, Winnipeg
- The Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg
- Western Canada Aviation Museum, Winnipeg
- Niagara Historical Society & Museum, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON
- Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto
- Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto
- McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal
- Pointe à Callière, Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Montréal
- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC
- New Brunswick Museum, Saint John
- Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, NS

A discount of at least 10 percent on regular admission will be given upon presentation of your membership card. Some restrictions may apply. All subscribers to the *Beaver* are automatically members of the Society.

Catherine Munn Smith, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is the great-niece of Walter Moodie. She lives in Calgary. After leaving the ranch, Moodie surveyed what would become southern Alberta and British Columbia before joining the B.C. Rifles and serving in the Boer War.

Teeter-totter With few toys, no playgrounds, and no playmates their own age, the three Hill girls have to be satisfied with a makeshift teeter-totter in front of the house at Glenbow Ranch, near Calgary, in 1891. Providing the necessary fulcrum is their cousin, Walter Moodie, who has travelled north with their father Leslie Hill, after Hill sold his ranch in Montana. They appear to be wearing their Sunday best, so it may well be a Sunday, with church over and lunch waiting. On Monday morning, Walter will return to being a cowboy, and the girls will have to amuse themselves as best they can. Soon, Walter's parents and his three older sisters will join him and Hill and the three girls, who are without a mother. But ranching at Glenbow is not a success. Three years later, the Moodies move to Calgary. Leslie Hill and his daughters return to England.

Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478–167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.



tvo

War's True Colours

TVO commemorates the 60th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day with a special presentation of the three-part documentary, The Colour of War.
May 9, 10, 11 at 10 pm.

Also this spring:

The Adventure of English
An encore presentation of Melvyn Bragg's fascinating history of the English language.
Mondays at 10 pm April 11, 18, 25 & May 2, continuing May 16, 23, 30 and June 6.

Canada: A People's History
The story of our nation unfolds.
Mondays at 7 pm beginning April 18.

Foyle's War
Michael Kitchen returns as the dogged wartime detective, Christopher Foyle, in four new feature-length stories.
Sundays at 8 pm May 8, 15, 22 & 29.

tvo.org

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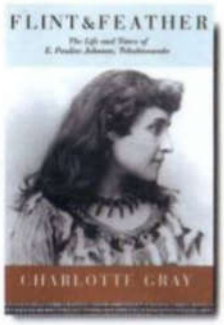
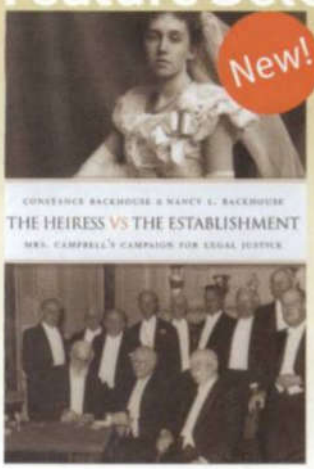
Pierre Berton Award Winner



Flint & Feather: The Life and Times of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake
by Charlotte Gray
Daughter of a Mohawk chief and an English gentlewoman, Pauline Johnson was a striking beauty and one of Canada's most beloved poets at the turn of the last century. Gray recounts the mystery and romance of this curious and tragic woman with characteristic skill and grace. A first-rate biography. 438 pages, illustrations, index.
Publishers List Price: $22.95
Member Price: $17.00 (paper)

Feature Selection



New! The Heiress vs The Establishment
by Constance Backhouse & Nancy L. Backhouse
When the Ontario establishment closes ranks against Toronto socialite Elizabeth Campbell, defrauded by her uncle, she makes her own way to London to argue her case before the Privy Council – the first woman to do so. A witty, first-person account book-ended by contemporary insight, this is an exciting legal thriller and a fascinating social portrait of intrigue at the highest levels. 321 pages, illustrations, index.
Publisher's List Price: $29.95
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Youth

The Bone Collector's Son
by Paul Yee
In Vancouver in 1907, fourteen-year-old Bing Chan is forced to help his father collect bones of deceased Chinese to send back to China. But sinister things begin to happen soon after his first trip to the graveyard. A winning ghost story set against a historically accurate backdrop. 175 pages, map.
Publisher's List Price: $12.95
Member Price: $10.95

Essentials

The Return of The Nonsuch: The Ship that Launched an Empire
by Laird Rankin
The original *Nonsuch* sparked the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 and 300 years later its life-size replica sparked delighted crowds around North America. As this engaging memoir reveals, building and sailing a 17th-century ship in the 20th century was both a challenge and an unrivaled adventure. 140 pages, illustrations.
Publishers List Price: $24.95
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Audio&Video

Rosies of the North
directed by Kelly Saxberg
The spirited women who worked at Canadian Car and Foundry in World War II describe with wit and humour their role in the production of the Hurricane and the Helldiver aircraft, among the most effective tools in the Allied arsenal. The film also features Elsie MacGill, the first woman in the world to design an airplane. 48 minutes.
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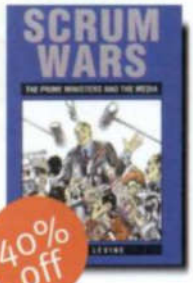

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by Allan Levine
An anecdotal and analytical account of the fascinating and dramatic confrontations between the prime ministers of Canada and the men and women of the Canadian news media. 350 pages, illustrations, index.
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